

Peace deal passes first Orange test

Ewen MacAskill
in Belfast

THE Northern Ireland peace settlement survived its first test yesterday when an Apprentice Boys march in Belfast opted against confrontation in the Lower Ormeau, a strongly nationalist district and a traditional flashpoint.

The marchers were stopped at a temporary police barrier on a bridge over the River Lagan. Instead of attempting to force a way through, they marked time while their leader, the hearded and bowler-hatted Worthington McGrath, expressed "hinter disappointment" and handed in a letter of protest.

But as they wheeled away the band defiantly played The Sash, a hint that while this Easter Monday parade passed peacefully there will be tougher tests ahead when the marching season gets fully under way in July.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary's chief constable, Ronnie Flanagan, praised the marchers' "great maturity", but expressed concern that there was evidence of local agreements about other contentious parades. He said there was still scope for "tremendous disorder".

There is the unresolved problem of the annual stand-off at Drumcree, in Portadown, on July 5, as well as a planned return to the Lower Ormeau road.

Yesterday's parade was the first test not only for the peace settlement but of the Government's new Parades Commission, set up to adjudicate over disputed routes. In its first ruling last week, the commission, headed by Alistair Graham, a former trade union official from northern England, barred the march.

Until then, decisions had been left to the RUC. Despite the commission's decision, the nationalist community still expressed unhappiness yesterday. Gerard Rice, the spokesman for the Residents' Association, said that the problem had been postponed for another day and that the only answer lay in dialogue.

The Apprentice Boys refuse to speak to the residents' association because Mr Rice has been convicted of possession of a firearm and membership of the IRA. Mr Rice said the final gesture of the Apprentice Boys had not gone unnoticed: "They still played The Sash, as they had always done. There is a need to show respect for each other. This is

not a march, it is a political statement — triumphalism."

The Lower Ormeau, where Irish tricolours hung from lamp posts yesterday, has long been a trouble spot. It is a nationalist enclave close to the city centre and an easy target for rampaging Orangemen or loyalist gunmen. Mr Rice said that 55 of the 1,200-strong community had been killed in the Troubles.

A plaque on a wall in Hatfield Street commemorates five people killed together — the oldest 66 and the youngest only 15 — by loyalist gunmen outside a bookmaker's shop in the Lower Ormeau in 1992.

There are moderate nationalists who claim there could be a peaceful compromise to the marches but this is being blocked by activists from Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA.

There are 3,200 Orange parades scheduled for this year, though only about a dozen are contentious: Drumcree and the Lower Ormeau are the two most emotive. In making his judgments Mr Graham has to take into account not only the traditional right to march but a factor too often ignored by the RUC — the impact on the communities the parades pass through. He is scheduled to adjudicate on Drumcree next Monday.



A soldier keeps watch in Belfast city centre yesterday as Northern Ireland's Orange marching season got under way

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN LEWIS

He will have to adjudicate on the Lower Ormeau again this year because the march leader, Mr McGrath, warned that though they had failed yesterday they will try again. The Apprentice Boys yesterday kept the march low key, confining their numbers to a flute band and just a dozen others. Local people, too, kept a low profile, staying

indoors rather than coming out to hurl abuse. RUC superintendent Stephen Grange, whose area covers the Lower Ormeau, said the peace settlement had passed its first hurdle. He was non-committal when asked about the marching season ahead. "Each parade will be looked at on its merits."

John Hume, the leader of

Northern Ireland's main nationalist party, warned politicians yesterday against being diverted from the peace process by an obsession with the handover of weapons by the paramilitaries.

Mr Hume, one of the driving forces behind Friday's deal, put himself at odds with the Ulster Unionists and the former prime minister, John

Major, who see decommissioning as a priority. An arms handover, mainly ignored in the settlement agreed by the main Northern Ireland parties, is fast becoming the major sticking point to further progress.

But Mr Hume, leader of the SDLP, said: "The real question isn't decommissioning. The real question is: those

paramilitaries on both sides of the divide, when they say they have ended their violence, do they mean it? If they were playing games they could surrender their guns on a Monday and buy more secretly on a Tuesday."

"Feel-good" projects, page 4; Hugo Young, page 5; Leader, comment, letters, page 9

Pilot who saved Branson dies after fall

Shattered on concrete, but 'he carried on fighting until the end'

Ruaridh Nicoll

AFTER a valiant three-month battle to recover from horrific injuries sustained in a 13,000ft fall, Alex Ritchie, co-pilot on Richard Branson's round-the-world balloon attempt, died on Sunday.

Mr Ritchie, who last year saved Mr Branson's life, suffered extensive injuries when his parachute failed over a Moroccan airfield in January. He was flown to Britain and struggled through nine operations, almost recovering before septicemia set in.

"He was a fighter until the end," his son Duncan said yesterday. "We are all extremely upset, even though we knew how ill he was."

For the last three months, 52-year-old Mr Ritchie's estranged wife Jill kept up a bedside vigil with their sons Duncan, aged 20, and 24-year-old Alasdair. Mr Ritchie's parents and sister flew from their homes in South Africa to be near him.

Mr Branson also made frequent visits. Yesterday he said he planned to dedicate his next round-the-world attempt to his colleague. "It is never easy losing a friend even if one has had some months in preparing for it."

In January 1997 Mr Ritchie saved Mr Branson by slowing their balloon's descent one minute before it slammed into Morocco's Atlas mountains. The balloon had developed a problem only 24 hours after take-off and was falling at 33ft a second.

Mr Ritchie, a talented engineer, climbed out into the pitch-black night and manually jettisoned the heavy fuel tanks, allowing the crew to regain control. Speaking after the drama, Mr Branson said: "If Alex hadn't been there we would have gone into the ground. He saved our lives and he's the hero of the hour. He showed unbelievable bravery."

It was during the preparations for another attempt that tragedy enveloped Mr Ritchie. Although he hated parachuting, the freefall over Marrakesh was part of the training.

He borrowed a parachute from a local flying school only to find, while passing 9,000ft, that it did not work. He managed to open his reserve at 2,000ft but it failed to slow him enough and he fell on to concrete. His injuries included breaking a leg and his pelvis, fracturing his arms and badly damaging internal organs.

Mrs Ritchie said that after about four weeks in hospital, having fought off a bout of septicemia, he was moved from intensive care to a general ward.

"He was well enough to be fed up and irritated," she said. "But on March 12 he was taken back into intensive care for an operation to try to put together his pelvis. The septicemia flared up again after the surgery."

Throughout the last weeks Mrs Ritchie kept talking to him, ignoring his comatose state.

"He slowly began to im-

prove and started to wake up again a few days ago. He was still on a full life support machine with a pacemaker, ventilator and a kidney machine because his kidneys had failed." The whole family visited him on Good Friday.

Mr Ritchie joined the Virgin team in 1997, a last minute replacement for world civilian skydiving champion

Rory McCarthy who had been grounded because of a lung infection.

"Even after his accident he said that he was determined to be fit enough to attempt the balloon flight again next winter," said Mr Branson. "Sadly that is not to be and we have all lost not only a great friend but also one of the most professional colleagues I have

ever had the pleasure to work with."

"In that spirit we are determined to go on and attempt to fly around the world later this year in a capsule which he designed and built."

"The trip will be dedicated to him and we will undertake the flight in his honour."

Obituary, page 10



After the crash: Richard Branson tells how Alex Ritchie saved them

PHOTOGRAPH: JACQUELINE ART

IMF predicts relief for Brown in reverse of pound

Alex Brummer
in Washington

THE strength of the pound could soon start to reverse itself, providing some much-needed relief for the Chancellor Gordon Brown and British exporters, the International Monetary Fund predicted yesterday in its authoritative report on the world economy.

The surge of the pound — up more than 30 per cent in a year — has created havoc for UK manufacturers and has put Mr Brown under pressure to lower its value.

Speaking in Washington, the IMF's chief economist, Michael Mussa, said that the IMF expected the pound to "correct downwards against other European currencies" as the deficit in Britain's balance of payments increases and growth in the European economies surges past the UK.

With the UK economy slowing rapidly as a result of sterling's high value, the Asian crisis and the budget tightening since Labour came to office a year ago, the IMF also believes that the next move in British base rates, and therefore mortgage rates, could be downwards.

Sterling has become the most serious problem facing Mr Brown since he took over as Chancellor with critics accusing him of dealing a death blow to industry by handing over control of interest rates to the Bank of England. The base rate has risen from 6 per

cent to 7.25 per cent since he took office.

The IMF believes that the rise in the pound against European currencies is now beginning to cause serious difficulties similar to those which occurred in the United States in the mid-1980s, when much of industry was wiped out creating a "rustbelt".

The IMF sees the service sector booming, creating an unbalanced and unsustainable position. Only a reversal of sterling's strength could turn matters around.

According to IMF forecasts published yesterday, the trigger for the change could come when UK growth slows to 2.5 per cent this year and falls more in 1999 at a time when growth in Germany and France starts to surge.

The IMF says the robust growth in Europe will mean that the single currency, the euro — which will effectively be launched on May 1 — will be strong and will take the upward pressure off the pound. It dismisses the idea that the pound's extraordinary strength stems from London's position as a safe haven away from the uncertainties surrounding the European project.

The Fund forecast that Britain will move from a current account surplus of \$7 billion (£4.2 billion) last year to a \$15 billion deficit this year as exporters lose competitiveness. Mr Brown arrives in Washington today for a meeting of the Group of Seven industrial countries.

Folk formula gives way to musical melodrama from Russia's gypsy past

Review

Bob Flynn

Shoots And Roots Festival
Edinburgh

WHAT with all the heads thrown back in song, whooping laughter and Cos-

sack dancing, you could be forgiven for thinking that there had been a leak of intoxicating fumes at the Caledonian Brewery. But it had little to do with alcohol and all to do with the instantaneous effect of Loyko, a Russian trio who brought their ancient gypsy music like an icon from the east. Nobody knew what they were singing about but it didn't really matter.

Loyko's impassioned set was a highlight of a weekend of traditional music under the banner of Shoots And Roots, the much-reduced reincarnation of the Edinburgh Folk Festival, which expired last year as a result of thin programming, poor attendance and, it has to be said, old fogeyism in the face of the success of Glasgow's Celtic Connections.

The roots juggernaut of

Celtic Connections not only dragged the music out of the snug bars and tents but also cast a glaring light on Scotland's east-west (Edinburgh-Glasgow) musical divide. Some scepticism greeted the new format, which shamelessly copied Celtic Connections by banishing any dangerous use of the word "folk", but a series of sell-out shows proved director David Francis

got the four-day event just right.

Loyko's music is all unashamed melodrama and it is impossible not to be swept up into its mad arms. The feverish Russian story-songs are delivered with a tight three-part harmony, making them sound like the Gypsy Kings on a cocktail of vodka and speed. Violinist cousins Sergei Erdenko and Oleg Ponomarev

fire off scarping, keening, fiddle conversations while guitarist Vadim Koulitskii creates the rhythmic foundations. Folkies and mazurkas come to sudden raging climaxes with raised arms in the traditional flourish of the old gypsy players.

On the same night in the Teviot Hall, the original venue for the folk festival, Martin Hayes and Dennis Ca-

hill cast a spell which will linger in the mind and the soul. They were the sublime to Loyko's ridiculous. Hayes is the new master of Irish music, and he unfolded an exquisite range of airs, reels and jigs. Born in County Clare, Hayes has a way with soft, hilarious introductions which are offset by the lyrical beauty of his playing that goes far beyond obvious technical brilliance.

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Quality on the greens
For real
misogyny
Just try
playing
around
of golf

men's position as second class
in many clubs may soon
be ended, reports John Duncan

Clubhouse rites

Magazine loses to
over Seinfeld's va



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Inequality on the greens

For real misogyny just try playing a round of golf

Women's position as second class citizens in many clubs may soon be ended, reports John Duncan



Getting to grips with a game whose clubs are still largely controlled by men, often to the disadvantage of women

PHOTOGRAPH BY DON MCFEE

WHEN the MCC voted against admitting women members two months ago, there were those who pointed to it as the last bastion of male supremacy, an island of old school misogyny in a brave new world where all were equal. Whoever said that does not play golf.

The Equal Opportunities Commission this week estimated that two-thirds of all the complaints it receives about private clubs are about golf clubs, and a golf magazine has backed a campaign to have the law changed to prevent discrimination.

Jane Carter, editor of *Women and Golf* magazine, said: "Although it is true that the more recently developed clubs have abandoned the idea of separate fees and therefore fewer rights for women members, in the majority of Britain's 2,000 golf clubs with more than 100 years of tradition behind them, women often still find themselves out in the cold." She estimates that 75 per cent still practise some form of discrimination.

Women find themselves sidelined in various ways, from the petty and bureaucratic to the offensive. Women are allowed to play at many clubs only when demand is low — daytime on weekdays — a legacy of a time when women didn't work and could play when their man was at the office.

Southport and Ainsdale, on Merseyside, is typical.

Women are not allowed on the course until after 4pm on Saturdays and 1.30pm on Sundays, although on Sundays they are allowed to slot in between the men from 12noon if they start at the seventh hole.

At some clubs they must give way to men if asked. Not all the rules are in any constitution. At Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, the women's section secretary, Judith Benson says it is "an unwritten rule" that women do not play on Sunday mornings.

Many clubs have come up with a different level of membership for women which does not give them a vote in club affairs and hence any power to improve their lot at the club.

At Alnham Golf Club, in Northumberland, women can go to annual general meetings

and have a vote, but are not allowed on the committee.

Women remain barred from areas of some clubs, or are not permitted to walk on certain paths or specially carpeted areas of the bar.

"We do not object to clubs offering different levels of membership if all levels are open to both sexes," said the EOC deputy chairwoman Georgina James. "In the past, some golf clubs have restricted full membership to men, allowing women associate status only, denying them full and equal participation. It is unacceptable to use associate membership as a second class option for women."

The situation has got so bad and the rate of voluntary change so disappointing, the EOC is proposing to change

the law to hit discriminating clubs.

In a government-commissioned consultative document on a new Sex Discrimination Act, the EOC is seeking a law making it illegal for golf clubs who have admitted women to some level of membership in recent years to deny them full rights. If that gets on to the statute book in the next two years, clubs face a revolution. The financial benefits of change may soothe hurt male pride. In the past seven years the number of golfers has grown by 18 per cent, but only 2 per cent of the intake were men.

Some clubs such as Burnham and Berrow, in Somerset, recruit women. The problem, according to Women and Golf magazine, is that many leave the game quickly be-

cause of the way they are treated.

The other financial imperative driving change is lottery cash. Of 181 golf club applications for lottery money only 30 have been successful — golf gets only 1 per cent of the total awards made. More applications from golf clubs are rejected than any other sport — 84 per cent compared with a 58 per cent average. One of the main reasons is golf's attitude to women.

"There is a simple issue of fairness here," said Peter Grant of the English Sports Council. "The lottery is played by everybody so its benefits should be available to everyone equally. Golf fails to do this principle. The English Sports Council will not even countenance a provisional offer until a club amends its rules."

But, say some women golfers, things are not as bad as they are sometimes made out. "It annoys me that the same incidents are brought up again and again," says Jan Bennett, a former chairwoman of the English Ladies Golf Association. "Those things do happen, but while they are upsetting for the people involved it's very rare. It's blown out of all proportion. We are moving in the right direction but it's a slow process."

Bennett's own club, Berkhamsted, in Hertfordshire, has recently voted to give women equality. The rest may soon have to follow. Additional reporting: Lisa Cockrell, Niall Couper

How a veteran pro and battler beat sex bias after 30 years

VIVIAN Saunders is not a woman to be taken lightly, nor a golfer to trifle with. Saunders (right) has spent more than 30 years facing down discrimination against women in golf and has come out very much on top, writes John Duncan.

Deciding to turn pro in 1969 after becoming British Women's Open Champion, she failed to get a job as a club pro and decided to buy her own club instead. She doubled the membership in two years.

"I have been a professional golfer for 29 years," she said. "When I started off with the Professional Golfers Association they had a rule saying that lady golfers shall have exactly the same rights as men, save that they shall not attend meetings, play in tournaments or vote. They only changed that because the Equal Opportunities Commission forced them. This is the governing money of professional golf we're talking about."



pioneer of the successful European women's golf tour, bought Abbotsey Golf Club in St Neots, Cambridgeshire, in 1986. It now boasts two courses with 800 members, of whom the majority are men. Everyone is treated equally.

But Saunders is frustrated that not enough is done to take on golf clubs who she says are already breaking the law in discriminating against women. "It's quite specific in the licensing laws for private clubs that men and women in a club have to all be full members. You can't discriminate between them. The police and the licensing authorities already have the power to act, but they rarely do."

PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM TURNER

Magazine loses the plot over Seinfeld's vanity affair

Joanna Coles in New York

THE thin membrane of American journalistic integrity suffered an ugly tear this week, when it became apparent that Jerry Seinfeld, the country's most popular comedian, had been granted a sneak preview of an upcoming profile in *Vanity Fair* magazine and then demanded editorial changes.

Last night the American media was agog, for although it is not unusual for celebrities to be given copy approval in glossy fashion magazines, *Vanity Fair* takes its journalism more seriously than the Constitution.

The story reached near hysterical proportions when it became clear Mr Seinfeld's long-standing publicist, Lori Jonas, had been abruptly fired for blowing his cover. She is thought to have faxed the magazine directly with Mr Seinfeld's comments on the piece scribbled in the margins, when she was supposed to have returned it discreetly to the journalist who wrote it, Lynn Hirschberg.

Editors at the magazine became suspicious after they



Jerry Seinfeld: sitcom earns him \$1 million an episode

received a copy of Mr Seinfeld's comments and Ms Hirschberg, who had signed a confidentiality agreement guaranteeing she would not show anyone the piece, telephoned them to beg for changes.

"Somehow Seinfeld got a copy," a spokeswoman for the magazine confirmed briskly. The magazine made two factual changes but refused to "soften one paragraph". Gossip columnists have been drooling over the story, while chat shows have dissected the cosy relationship

between celebrities and an ostensibly objective media.

Meanwhile, it is difficult from the unctuous tone of the piece to see what upset Mr Seinfeld, whose final show was taped in Los Angeles last week. He earns \$1 million for every episode of the most-watched sitcom in America. In the profile he discusses his collection of 25 Porsches, including one of only 40 Spyder models in the world. "I considered bringing it into the house," he says, "but it's aluminum and I was afraid it might get dented."

Blunkett faces down jeering teachers

continued from page 1 and teachers to work in partnership.

"I ask teachers to stop believing they are victims and start seeing themselves as partners in change. It is easy to shout slogans, it is harder to make it happen on the ground... you can be part of the learning age, where inequality and injustice can be set aside."

Leftwing delegates said they were not satisfied with Mr Blunkett's assurances. Will Reese, a Coventry teacher on the executive of the Socialist Teachers Alliance, said there was "a persistent threat of criticism about teachers from the Government".

They were singled out for attack by Tony Blair and senior Labour Party figures. The Government's policies were "turning knowledge into a commodity and schools into factories", he said.

The bonfire of red tape announced by Mr Blunkett will include reduced demands on schools from the Office for Standards in Education, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Teacher Training Agency and local education authorities.

You don't have to be French to shop in Calais

The shopping forecast.



Attention all shoppers, especially in areas a short hop from Dover.

Here is the shopping forecast from the English Channel.

Dover to Calais - crossings, frequent.

Shopping prices falling steadily.

Wines plentiful from all regions with bargains, imminent.

Bries moderate. Other cheeses also excellent.

Hotel accommodation - good. Restaurants - fine.

There'll be a few passengers unwinding as the day goes on and we'll see more ferries along shortly.

What are you waiting for? With around 140 crossings a day.

Calais

begins with sea

DOVER/CALAIS - OVER 140 CROSSINGS EVERY DAY
P&O STENA LINE, SEAFRANCE & BOWERSPEED

They burped and farted and slung their bags down. If they were worried about us fancying them, we didn't.

When the lads from Leeds came to stay in Soho

G2 covery story

Detention more likely for refugees

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

ALARGE-SCALE expansion in the detention of asylum seekers in special centres is being considered by ministers in an overhaul of Britain's refugee and immigration system.

A sharp increase in the 800 asylum seekers now detained without charge is expected to provoke a row among Labour MPs.

Later this week, two damning inquiries into conditions at the country's biggest detention centre, Campsfield House, Oxfordshire, will be published. David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, is expected to be critical of the way the centre is run by Group 4, as well as scathing in his judgment about asylum policy.

Whitehall officials, grappling with how to improve a system that has a backlog of 75,000 cases, some dating back more than five years, believe extending detention will tighten asylum policy and ensure it is not seen as a "soft touch" for economic migrants.

Ministers are believed to want to see a sharp increase in the number of detentions for those who have appealed against being refused asylum or who are awaiting deportation. A proposal to introduce some form of judicial scrutiny of the decision by immigration officers to detain individuals by the courts, is believed to have been rejected.

The alternative to an extension of detention is to start "chartering planes" to increase deportations from Britain of failed asylum seekers. Only a small proportion of rejected asylum seekers are removed from the country.

Whichever option is adopted, ministers will insist asylum applicants report weekly to a police station so that they cannot "disappear". But these tougher moves are expected to be accompanied by limited restoration of welfare benefits for most asylum applicants, a quicker and fairer appeals system, and the permission to stay for about 10,000 people who have been awaiting a decision for more than five years.

The package, to be announced in July, is emerging from Whitehall reviews of the asylum and immigration

system. Civil servants have told Home Office ministers that the entire system is now "a complete shambles" and costs £500 million a year to run. They warn that if nothing is done the bill will rise to £800 million annually by 2002.

The 10,000 applicants who have been waiting since 1992 for their cases to be resolved, may soon be allowed to stay — although talk of an "amnesty" will be strongly resisted for political reasons. Those who cannot return, or whose cases are too difficult to resolve, could get "exceptional leave to remain", a classification just short of full refugee status. Many of these people have now put down roots in Britain.

The initial interviews of asylum seekers will also be improved through a training programme and a shorter but fairer system of appeals. Appeal tribunals will be chaired by a High Court judge, and only one hearing will be allowed, but humanitarian grounds will be admissible for the first time. Rulings in one case will set a precedent for others.

The Home Office has already announced that it will publish the secret rule books guiding immigration decisions, and the "country assessments" that determine asylum applications.

Ministers are also considering ways of restoring welfare benefits through "an asylum seekers' allowance" which would be short of full Income Support but be higher than the legal basic rate for food and accommodation provided by local authorities.

A draconian option of all asylum seekers staying for a month in a very basic reception centre before being able to claim welfare benefits, has been rejected. Officials fear that such sparse conditions — as a deterrent to late asylum applications from say, east European air pairs — could cause riots.

Instead, a proposal is to ban "undeserving" applicants from the allowance. These would be allowed a "food, warmth and shelter" safety net, but it would be administered by the Government rather than local authorities.

Nearly 250,000 asylum seekers are thought to have settled in London since 1990 and been absorbed without much conflict. But so far little has been done to address their problems.



Two faces, one past... Denise Smith, a medical artist at Manchester university, between two reconstructions of the skull of the 9,000-year-old Cheddar Man discovered in the Somerset gorge. The clay version on the left shows a bona reconstruction while the plaster version on the right shows how he may have looked in life

Feel-good projects prop up peace deal

Belfast schemes worth £150m criticised as bribe by loyalists

Rory Carroll

THE Government has approved two huge education and entertainment initiatives in Belfast to help generate a feel-good atmosphere in the run up to May's referendum on the peace agreement. A £50 million university, and a £50 million millennium project, will transform the city in what critics say is a massive bribe at the taxpayers' expense.

An Elton John concert,

pledges of American aid, a visit by Bill Clinton and peace-promoting billboards, are also intended to sway doubters in time for the May 22 vote.

Approval of the Springvale campus, a cross-community university built on the peace line in west Belfast, delighted Sinn Féin who are struggling to sell last Friday's historic deal to sceptical grassroots supporters. The previous Conservative government ditched the idea after five years of dithering, mainly on the grounds that it was too

expensive and duplicated the Belfast Institute of further and higher education.

A leaked Northern Ireland Office memo recommended a series of carefully timed positive announcements to sustain the campaign for a "yes" vote in the referendum.

In 1994, nationalists enlisted Al Gore, the US vice-president, to promote the educational and economic benefits of sitting a campus of 3,000 students in a deprived area. Most of the money for Springvale, originally the idea of the University of Ulster, will come from the public purse. Approval is expected to be formally announced on Thursday.

Peter Robinson, deputy

leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, which opposes the peace settlement, said the welcome given by other parties showed the decision was political, not educational.

He said: "The Government is going to use all of our collective money to bribe people in Northern Ireland to support the agreement. They're manipulating the whole situation. Springvale doesn't make any sense. It's not a place that any unionist could ever go to, they wouldn't go within a mile of it."

"These decisions could have been announced at any time over the past months but they were held back, just like Clinton's £100 million. It is

bribery." The invitation to Elton John to perform a concert at Stormont was part of the same feel-good manipulation, he added.

But Mr Robinson's comments were rejected by nationalists and unionist opponents, who said that the campus would be built on neutral ground.

Billy Hutchinson, of the UVF-linked Progressive Unionist Party, said: "It is an ideal spot and will give us the opportunity to get together under one roof. If the referendum gets the 'yes' vote, this is the sort of thing that will help us build a better future."

Sinn Féin leader and west Belfast MP Gerry Adams, also welcomed the development.

"Our primary task now is to ensure that local people get jobs from this, and that every effort is made to construct the educational village environment which will benefit all the people of Belfast."

The millennium landmark project, called Odyssey, will occupy 23 acres at Belfast docks, making it the biggest building project ever attempted in Northern Ireland, and will be three times larger than the Waterfront Hall.

The funding package is made up of £45 million from the Millennium Commission, £15 million from Belfast-based developers, and £30 million from the public sector. Approval for this is also expected to be given this week.

RUC pleads for public partnership

Rory Carroll

THE Royal Ulster Constabulary yesterday pleaded for a new partnership, in which the public turn in terrorists and the police become more likeable. RUC chief constable, said his officers were human beings who could not help looking with wonder at the planned early release of paramilitary prisoners.

He said a peaceful environment could transform policing methods virtually overnight — implying that radical reform of the force, mooted as part of an overall settlement, might be unnecessary.

"We need full public co-op-

eration to be fully effective. We're getting that co-operation in large measure, but I appeal to the public that any information they have to hand, however trivial they might think it, they must hand to us."

"If we get this removal of the significant threat that we face, we can have a dramatically improving relationship... and rapid change in the way we go about our business."

Sinn Féin activists said yesterday there had been no thaw between the RUC and the nationalist community. Party members remained subject to taunts and beatings, they claimed.

Under Friday's historic agreement, an independent

commission would look at ways of making the force more acceptable to nationalists, raising the possibility that it could be abolished to make way for a Northern Ireland Police Service.

Fears are growing among rank and file members of the 11,500-strong force that it will be cut to 7,000. The Government is also committed to drafting more Catholics into the force, which is 92 per cent Protestant.

Pat Armstrong, chairman of the Police Authority, said the threat of personnel cuts, which would hang over the heads of officers during the marching season.

It was only a matter of time before Sinn Féin was ap-

peased with the recruitment of paramilitaries, said Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party. "The intention is to put uniforms on the backs of IRA men and send them out as policemen."

The possibility of former kneecappers becoming colleagues is making officers even more nervous, said Alan Burnside, Police Federation press officer. "They're very twitchy about that factor."

Talk of reform was making officers increasingly resentful, said another source. They saw it as an ungrateful response to their sacrifices.

The commission, which will include foreign specialists, must report to the Government before summer 1999.

Union rift on school aid 'touting'

Pay threat seen in education scheme for deprived zones

John Carroll
Education Editor

ATEACHERS' union leader came under fire yesterday for secretly negotiating with the financial sector to form a consortium to run education action zones in some of England's most deprived areas.

Peter Smith, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) confirmed the Guardian's disclosure that he was in exploratory talks with "the Government and leading commercial, educational and social organisations", about participating in one of the first zones.

The announcement surprised members of his union

executive who had been kept in the dark about the deal.

Smith, the general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, condemned Mr Smith's initiative saying it undermined the joint union campaign to defend national agreements on teachers' pay and conditions, which might be suspended in the zones.

He said: "For the ATL to be complicit in a scheme which could undermine national pay and conditions is outrageous and deplorable."

The NASUWT, whose annual conference started yesterday in Scarborough, said it "bitterly resented" schools and local education authorities "being sent cap-in-hand touting for money

from business". But the Department for Education and Employment welcomed Mr Smith's intervention.

"The Government will treat all bids to run action zones on their merits, but it is keen to see teachers' organisations playing a leading role," a spokesman said.

Mr Smith has been putting together a consortium to become a leading player in at least one of the 20 zones due to come into operation in January. The participants are understood to include Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank, Commercial Union, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Nuffield Foundation, and the exam board Edexcel.

The zones will each cover about 20 schools in a deprived area, and are planned as test-beds of state education organisation, led mostly by LEAs, community groups and businesses.

The largest teaching union,

the National Union of Teachers, yesterday passed a motion condemning the zones as a potential threat to the provision of state education.

It sanctioned strike action in any zone where pay and conditions were threatened, but rejected unconditional opposition to the zones. Doug McAvoy, NUT general secretary, said his union was not interested in setting up zones.

But Mr Smith said the zones were a key feature of Labour's election manifesto; teachers wanted a proper leading role in the programme of innovative change, but needed to see the Government work constructively with them.

"The ATL wants cast-iron guarantees from this Government that there will be no erosion of teachers' pay and conditions and that pupils, not profits, are the priority for any intending commercial sponsor in these zones."

Potato and aubergine join miraculous duster as objects of faith

THE growing catalogue of faith and chips meal and Linda Cole, 32, sliced it open and discovered the cross, formed of triceratops of mould. "It's amazing," said Linda's husband, Shaun, aged 35, who took the potato to his local Catholic church before placing it

reverently in the freezer. "I just such a perfect crucifix shape," he added. It will be preserved with a Manchester aubergine, also cut open yesterday but this time revealing the word "Allah" in its pattern of seeds.

Conservationists at Man-

chester Museum will advise on how the vegetable can be preserved, after a meeting of Islamic community leaders to consider its future.

If preservation works, the two vegetables will join a duster from Leeds town ball said to bear Christ's face in sundries of dirt.

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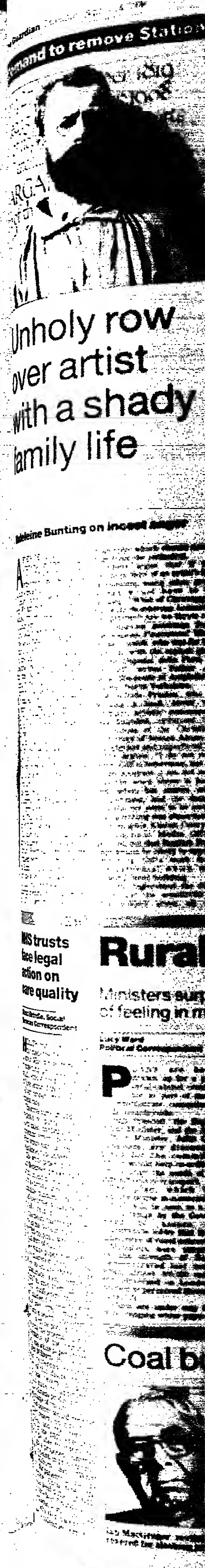
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Demand to remove Stations of the Cross from Westminster Cathedral



Unholy row over artist with a shady family life

Madeline Bunting on incest anger

A FIERCE debate has erupted in the Catholic Church over whether the work of Britain's most famous Catholic artist should be removed from Westminster Cathedral because he sexually abused his daughters.

Eric Gill's Stations of the Cross, depicting the stages in Christ's death and crucifixion, are one of the artistic treasures of the cathedral, and one of his most celebrated works. But Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse have called for the plaques to be removed, arguing that the work of an artist who had incestuous sexual relationships with two of his sisters and two of his daughters has no place in a house of God.

The controversy was started by a recent ITV series on the Stations of the Cross, in which Cardinal Basil Hume, the head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, presented meditations on the Passion of Christ in front of Gill's work.

The controversy fills the letter columns of this week's Catholic Herald. One correspondent demands that Cardinal Hume explains why "we are the work of a paedophile in our churches" while another comments that much of Gill's other work was por-

nography which should be removed from the cathedral.

Others argue that if the moral probity of an artist's life is relevant, many other great works would have to be banned. "What of Caravaggio, the wild murderous homosexual painter? Are we throw out his religious paintings from the Vatican Pinacoteca? What of the Vivaldi, who was far too familiar with the orphan girls of the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice?" writes Father Alberic Stacpoole of Ampleforth Abbey, North Yorkshire.

Winefride Pruden, who is writing a book about the Catholic artistic community Gill founded, criticises the arguments of the Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse as "irrelevant and superficial".

She argues: "I do not condone [Gill's] behaviour, but let us be accurate. I am not sure that the word abuse is justified when his sisters were complicit, and the daughters did not seem to be aware that anything was abnormal."

Monsignor Kieran Conry of the Catholic Media Office pointed out that English Heritage would be likely to oppose removing Gill's work from the cathedral which is a Grade I listed building. "I do understand the difficulty and the sensitivity of this subject given all the



Eric Gill as a young man (above left) and one of the plaques — depicting Jesus being condemned to death — which detractors say have no place in a house of God PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODMAN



Gill (at far end of the table) having tea with his family and local chaplain at Pigotts, Bucks, in the late 1930s

awful associations of child abuse for a victim and the implication of the Catholic Church. But if you remove Gill, where do you stop? Do you remove Caravaggio too?" Fiona MacCarthy, whose

biography of Gill in 1988 revealed for the first time the extent of his incest and paedophilia, described the proposal to ban his work as an appalling desecration.

"They are very great works of art. It's an absurdity to take them out of the building for which they were commissioned. It is pathetic for people to project their own anxieties on to a work of art."

Gill converted to Roman Catholicism in 1913 when he began on the Stations of the Cross for the cathedral. His work, life, art and faith were always inextricably linked. He set up a community of religious artists in Ditchling, East

A colourful palette: the artists who went against the grain

Eric Gill is not the only artist whose private life challenges orthodox Catholic morality. Other artists with potential to trouble the church include:

- Caravaggio. Wild Italian homosexual painter, famous for his use of chiaroscuro. Imprisoned for libel and violence; also involved in a stabbing. Depicted scantily clad boys with still-life accessories.
- Augustus John. British portrait painter and draughtsman whose tempestuous bohemian lifestyle and extensive family (nine children by two different women) shocked the Edwardian establishment.
- Michelangelo. Greatest sculptor and draughtsman in history. His favourite

subject was the male nude. Rumoured to be homosexual. Famously painted ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and worked for a series of capricious popes.

- Leonardo Da Vinci. Illegitimate genius who embodied the Renaissance, probably homosexual. Famous as painter of the Mona Lisa, as well as anatomical studies, architectural and scientific designs, and studies for uncompleted sculptures.
- Vivaldi. Italian composer and violin virtuoso, whose instrumental work defined the late Baroque period. Allegedly too familiar with orphan girls of the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, where he taught music during the first half of the 18th century.

— Luke Harding

NHS trusts face legal action on care quality

David Brindley, Social Services Correspondent

HEALTH ministers yesterday made the first change to their NHS white paper by toughening proposals that would expose hospital trusts to legal action if they failed to meet proper standards of patient care.

The move came in apparent response to public concern about cases involving cancer-screening errors, notably in Kent where eight deaths have been linked to blunders.

The white paper, published last December, proposed NHS trusts should have a statutory duty to provide care of an appropriate standard, and trust chief executives would be ultimately responsible. The change means that for the first time in the 50-year history of the NHS hospitals would have a legal duty of quality.

The white paper had left it to the discretion of chief executives to ensure there were "appropriate local arrangements" to give them and the boards confidence that responsibilities for quality were being met. "This might be through a board sub-committee... with responsibility for ensuring the internal clinical governance of the organisation," the white paper stated.

Alan Milburn, Health minister, yesterday removed much of this discretion. He said that "every hospital" would have to appoint a single, clinical professional to take charge of quality issues.

Trust boards would receive regular reports on quality of services, and the regional office of the NHS executive would be able to intervene, through a proposed commission for health improvement.

Mr Milburn said: "What counts for patients is quality of service. Until now, the principal legal duties of NHS trusts have been financial. The guidance will also support 'whistleblowers' in reporting colleagues' errors."

Rural issues to get strong voice in Cabinet

Ministers surprised by strength of feeling in march on London

Lucy Ward Political Correspondent

PLANS are being drawn up for a powerful cabinet committee as part of moves to demonstrate commitment to the countryside.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Agriculture Minister, John Gummer, are discussing plans for the committee which would help co-ordinate policy from the needs of village schools to transport.

The plan, which will require prime ministerial approval, will be seen as a further attempt by the Government to assure the countryside lobby that it has taken note of rural concerns.

Ministers were surprised by the strength of feeling demonstrated last month when almost 300,000 marchers converged on London to protest at perceived threats to rural life.

Plans are under way for a wide-ranging white paper due

to be published towards the end of the year. The document is expected to encompass all areas of country life, including greenfield development, declining farm incomes, inadequate transport, small school closures and sparse health provision.

Meanwhile, government sources insist a plan for a ministry for rural affairs, outlined on the eve of the countryside march, is still on the table. There have been suggestions that the scheme, which would see a transformed Ministry of Agriculture take control of key countryside policy areas from Mr Prescott's Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, has been stymied through turf wars between the two parent departments.

A rural affairs cabinet committee might include ministers drawn from health and education departments as well as the Mr Prescott and Mr Gummer and their ministers. Its role would be to promote co-ordination, easing concerns that an overarching



A marshal at Hyde Park during the protest against threats to the countryside

"new vision" set out in the white paper would put other ministries' noses out of joint. Its operation could mirror that of the cabinet committee on women's issues, backed by a women's unit of civil servants within the Department of Social Security, which is intended to ensure all government policy takes into account the needs of women.

That committee has proved effective in helping ensure a new working families tax credit for low income families can be paid to women and in pushing for more government help with childcare costs.

A government source insisted moves to co-ordinate rural policy need present no threat to other departments. "Nobody is suggesting that countryside interests should be pulled out altogether. But

on all these areas — transport, education — it is known that rural areas have different needs from urban areas."

He denied the plans represented an attempt to placate the rural lobby. There are about 170 Labour MPs with countryside seats. The Government was anxious to demonstrate that rural communities were about "more than just farmers and commuters".

Labour's vision

□ Greenfield development. Following protests over major housebuilding plans for green belt areas, the Government is now aiming to ensure at least 60 per cent of new development takes place on "brownfield" or recycled land by the millennium.

□ Transport. Labour's rural MPs have lobbied for curbs on petrol and diesel duty. Chancellor Gordon Brown announced an extra £50 million for rural bus services in last month's Budget, but there is pressure for more integrated improvements across public transport.

□ Village school closures. More than 450 rural schools have closed in the past 15 years, forcing children to journey beyond their local area. In a concession on the

eve of the countryside march, the Schools Minister, Stephen Byers, promised to end the "stream of closures".

□ Falling incomes. Farmers have joined mass lobbies at Westminster to highlight a 40 per cent slump in farm incomes. The white paper could contain measures for increasing jobs in rural areas with funding from new regional development agencies.

□ Health. Environment Minister Michael Meacher wants the white paper to specify the distinct needs of remote rural areas, which lack the concentrated medical services available in towns and cities. He has floated the idea of "satellite hospitals" to save on journeys for country dwellers.

Coal board chief who took on miners dies



Ian MacGregor: reviled and revered for slashing jobs

SIR Ian MacGregor, the businessman who took on Arthur Scargill's striking miners as chairman of the National Coal Board, died yesterday aged 85.

The Scots-born industrialist, who led the NCB during the 1984/85 miners' strike, suffered a heart attack while with friends in Somerset.

Denounced by his enemies as a hater and lauded by the Conservative government as a saviour of British industry, Sir Ian was one of the most high profile business fig-

ures of the 1980s. In his NCB role and earlier as chairman of the British Steel Corporation.

Tributes to Sir Ian were led by Baroness Thatcher. "He had a tremendous way of putting things," she said. "He made a real difference and I was very grateful when he came back to this country."

Educated in Edinburgh and Glasgow, he graduated from Glasgow university with a first class honours degree in metallurgy and in 1935 joined his father at the British Aluminium Company.

During the second world war he went to the US with the British Tank Mission to buy tanks and other hardware for the army.

He held a succession of increasingly important posts in US industry. In 1975, he returned to Britain and became a non-executive director of state-controlled British Leyland.

Official confirmation of his appointment as chairman of the British Steel Corporation was made to the Commons in May 1980 — but he hit the headlines when MPs heard that Britain was to pay a "transfer fee" of up to £1,825,000 to compensate American merchant bank La-

zard Freres for the loss of its senior partner.

With ruthless determination, he set about his task of trimming the steel industry. In January 1983 he told a Commons select committee he wanted a workforce of 70,000. By then 100,000 jobs had gone, reducing the payroll to 85,000.

Mr Scargill once dubbed him "the American butcher of British industry". Sir Ian replied: "I am not a butcher, I am a plastic surgeon — I try to rebuild damaged features."

Obituaries, page 10.

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Father Patrick Sullivan, below, tells his parishioners at the Pastora Church of Santa Clara on Sunday that he has been asked to leave by Communist officials angered by posters such as that on the church wall, which reads, "Remember the prisoners as if you were one of them. We are counting on your help"

Communist chiefs force US priest to leave Cuba

Tom Gibb in Havana

THE only United States Roman Catholic priest resident in Cuba says he is being forced to leave his parish after falling foul of the Communist authorities. Father Patrick Sullivan, from New York, has run two active parishes for four years in Santa Clara, the town where the Pope held his first mass on the island in January. The timing is curious. Fidel Castro's government has been working hard since the papal visit to court Church support for an easing of the United States' economic embargo against Cuba. The incident is bound to create tension.

Fr Sullivan said he would leave the island this week, although he was given the option of moving to Havana until his residency permit expires in February. Foreign priests must stay almost half the island's 280 clerics. He said his Church superiors had led him to believe that if he stayed in Cuba it would "bring about some reprisals by the government against the Catholic Church". Fr Sullivan apparently angered local party officials by running secret ballots for

the parish council, talking to foreign journalists and sticking up a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the church. Fr Sullivan worked under right-wing military regimes during most of the 20 years he spent in Central America. In that time his Capuchin Franciscan order was sometimes accused of being favorable to left-wing liberation theology. Two years ago his criticism of the lack of political tolerance in Cuba was published in the US press — although he also called the US economic embargo an "unjust and destructive set of laws" which denied medicines to the sick. His comments were considerably less direct than those made by the Pope, who called for political prisoners to be freed and for greater liberty of expression and association, and told Catholics that they had a duty to take part in public debate. Since the Papal visit Church leaders have kept a low profile, avoiding comments which could be construed as political. They say the Pope's visit has brought benefits: more priests are being allowed into the country, Catholic charities have a greater role and per-



PHOTOGRAPH: JOSE GOTTACANADIAN PRESS

Jury to rule if US killer is 'too insane' to execute

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

AFTER 12 years on California's death row, the triple murderer Horace Kelly was to have been executed last night. He survives to face a new trial and the proceedings will mean little to him.

Psychiatrists will testify that Kelly's years in a San Quentin prison death cell have driven him mad. As the United States supreme court prohibited the execution of the insane in 1986, a federal judge will today hear new legal submissions.

Meanwhile a state judge has begun empanelling a jury to decide whether Kelly, who is black and aged 38, is sane enough for death or should go to a mental hospital. The official view is that if he is cured, he will be brought back for his lethal injection.

The Kelly case epitomises the scathing criticism in a United Nations report this month which condemned US death sentences as arbitrary, racist, and sometimes in violation of international law.

Although Kelly may be legally insane now, he "didn't start with a full deck of cards", said Michael Radelet, a sociology professor and author of *Executing the Mentally Ill*.

Kelly also has three characteristics found in many death-row inmates. His father, a military serviceman, beat and sexually molested him; his mother drank heavily through her pregnancy; and Kelly, one of eight children, was born two months early, weighing only two pounds.

His family belonged to an evangelical Church that believed in demons and "the rod". His mother has testified that she "usually used a switch" but "often whatever object was available". Kelly's lawyers say he has a well-documented history of mental impairment, starting with trances at age two. In San Quentin he has been diagnosed as suffering from chronic schizophrenia with "delusions, hallucinations, incoherence and catatonic behaviour". He is unable to "appreciate his current legal position and make rational choices about court proceedings".

When a psychiatrist asked him if he felt guilt for his crimes, he replied: "The word guilty goes to litigation [sic] examination. You also can defend a person. Guilt runs three different words and meanings."

His murders were horrific. In November 1984 he picked up a hitch-hiker, raped and shot her dead. The next day he picked up another woman, tried to rape her and shot her dead. Both bodies were found naked from the waist down. His third victim was a boy aged 11 who rescued his 10-year-old cousin from Kelly's clutches. He shot the boy three times as he pleaded for his life.

If 'cured' at a mental hospital, he would then be brought back and executed.

The California law defining criminal sanity dates back to 1905 and no case has been heard since 1961. The judge who ordered the jury hearing has been making new law as he goes along.

Last year a US appeal court ruled that Kelly had forfeited the right to a federal appeal because his lawyers had missed a deadline. The law, it seems, is as confused as Kelly. Most disputes about whether a defendant is sane enough to be executed are resolved quickly by a judge working with prison psychiatrists. The relatively low standard set for mental competency — whether the patient understands what is happening and can answer simple questions about his predicament — means most such appeals for clemency are denied.

Richard Mazer, who heads Kelly's defence team, said Kelly clearly met the standard for mental incompetence and should not be put to death. "This is a man who is disabled in every way possible."

Brazil to extradite kidnap gang

Alex Bellos in Rio de Janeiro

BRAZIL has agreed to extradite the nine foreign Marxist revolutionaries who kidnapped one of its richest businessmen in 1969, bowing to international pressure for political prisoners to be shown compassion. The kidnapping of the supermarket magnate Abilio Diniz — father of the Formula One driver Pedro Diniz — by two Canadians, two Argentine, five Chileans and a Brazilian was one of the most prominent in Brazil, coming days before the 1989 general election.

The trial became an international human rights issue because the kidnappers, who were raising money for the war in El Salvador, were tortured and given unusually long sentences, ranging from 26 to 28 years.

The impact of the event on Brazilian politics is still being felt. Three of the gang were photographed by the media wearing Workers' Party T-shirts and the publicity is widely seen as losing the election for the party, which had been ahead in the opinion polls.

The human rights minister, Jose Gregori, denied that the decision to extradite the prisoners was linked to their announcement yesterday that they would begin a hunger strike.

Political commentators say the government wanted to avert diplomatic tension at the weekend summit of Latin American leaders in Santiago.

Abilio Diniz, whose empire includes the Pao de Azucar supermarket chain, was released unharmed after being held for six days in a suburb of Sao Paulo. The gang were captured after a 36-hour siege.

None of the prisoners has reacted to the government's announcement.

Anger as Big Brother spy tactics exposed

The Mexican government has listened in to the private lives of citizens for seven years, reports Molly Moore in Mexico City

JUST after 9pm, Senator Layda Sansores Sanroman banged on the front door of a concrete house in the historic centre of the southern city of Campeche. What she discovered when she opened it unleashed a scandal that has ripped open the underbelly of Mexican politics.

A hack room was crammed with electronic eavesdropping equipment. Another room contained files stuffed with thousands of pages of transcripts of telephone conversations of politicians, journalists and private citizens.

Intimate details of love affairs, corruption and tortious and damaging enough. But the raid on the government espionage centre has exposed extraordinary details of the government's hugging operations against its citizens, political foes and business leaders.

"I was furious to discover my life on papers, documents, recordings and computer files," said Ms Sansores, a federal senator from the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution. "Seven years of my life were there, in detail."

In recent weeks, more than a dozen other cases of government espionage have been uncovered, ranging from hidden microphones in the offices of the new government of Mexico City to interceptions of the telephone calls of a state governor.

The discoveries — and the willingness of the targets to go public with evidence — confirmed the longstanding suspicion of many Mexicans that their government acts like "Big Brother".

"Everything I say and do, I assume that I am being spied on," said Vicente Fox

of the National Action Party, governor of Guanajuato state and a declared candidate in the presidential elections in 2000. Mexico, controlled by a single political party for nearly 70 years, is struggling to make the transition to a multi-party democracy, and politicians and private citizens have begun to speak out in increasing numbers against the eavesdropping, one of the tools that many critics argue helped the Institutional Revolutionary Party to maintain its grip on power.

'You were my obsession. Seven years listening to your voice, recording you'

"It is a horrible, filthy method of political control," said Mariclaire Acosta, president of the Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights and a regular target of wiretaps. "It's a fundamental violation of the right to privacy."

Many citizens and human rights activists believe the explosion in kidnapping, drug trafficking and other crimes in the past two years has been abetted by corrupt law enforcement officials with access to wiretaps. Every government agency identified with the electronic surveillance operations — the federal attorney-general and interior ministry, the military, the national security agency and many state institutions — has denied knowing anything about it.

In Campeche, officials refused to be interviewed. Governor José González Curi's spokesman said in a statement, "The governor of Campeche is not involved in any case of espionage," and said the accusations were slanderous.

Party officials have accused Ms Sansores of manipulating the information to buttress her claim that the Institutional Revolutionary Party used fraud to defeat her in last year's gubernatorial election.

Tipped off by an anonymous note pressed into her hand during a campaign rally, Ms Sansores said, she spent several months looking for the spy centre. On the night she tapped on the front door of the building, 300 supporters encircled the house for the entire night to prevent the evidence being removed.

She and her aides unearthed records showing that state government cheques were used to buy more than \$1.2 million (\$740,000) in surveillance equipment from Israel.

They found certificates of commendation issued to two operators, one an employee of the Mexican national security agency, another a military intelligence specialist, and a list of names of the main bugging victims.

After the raid, Ms Sansores said, she was approached by the centre's operational director. He told her "You were my obsession for seven years. Seven years listening to your voice starting at 7am, recording you, transcribing your conversations."

She said: "I didn't know if I should cry or laugh... The man right there in front of me knew everything about me and my family. The times I was angry, sad, happy, the family problems."



Ugandan soldiers in training for attack by rebels backed by the Sudanese government

PHOTOGRAPH: BRENNAN LINSLEY

Rebel groups unite against Museveni

Sudan's Islamic government co-ordinates the activities of fighters from Congo, Sudan and Uganda who have pooled goals and set up base in Garamba National Park. Anna Borzello reports from Kampala

A COALITION force of Ugandan rebels, Sudanese government troops and former fighters of the ousted Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko is operating from bases in Garamba National Park in Congo, according to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Garamba, which is situated in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, borders Sudan to the north and is 82 miles from the Ugandan border.

The SPLA source said the force comprised 3,000 ex-Mobutu troops, 1,500 Ugandan rebels and several hundred SPLA deserters and Sudanese government troops.

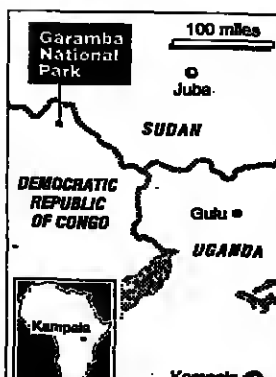
The claim was confirmed by Uganda's acting defence minister, Major-General Salim Saleh. "We know they are in the park. We are tracking their movements," he said.

The SPLA source said the Mobutu supporters fled to Garamba in February 1997 after their defeat by the forces of President Laurent Kabila, who seized the capital, Kinshasha, three months later.

The Sudanese soldiers and Ugandan rebels joined the group in March 1997, after a joint SPLA and Ugandan government offensive in South Sudan captured the Uganda/Sudan border for the SPLA.

During the March offensive the Sudanese bases of the Ugandan rebel West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) were destroyed. Hundreds of WNBF rebels were killed and more than 1,000 surrendered. But 1,500 rebels and several hundred Sudanese government soldiers escaped to Garamba.

The source said that although the three factions in Garamba had different goals,



there have been airdrops into Garamba by Sudanese government Antonov jets, the source said.

The NIF government hopes that by destabilising Uganda and her allies in the Great Lakes region it will be able to destroy support for the SPLA, which has been fighting domination by the Islamist North since 1989.

It is the first time that SPLA or Ugandan officials have admitted that there are opposition forces in Garamba. The forces have been able to conceal their presence because of the park's wooded terrain, which is ideal for guerrilla activity.

Park officials have not visited the area of Garamba where the forces are camped since Mr Kabila seized the region, destroying much of the park's infrastructure in the process. But officials have reported a sharp increase in meat and ivory poaching.

The Garamba coalition forces have also been able to rely on the local population for help while the Ugandan rebels, led by former soldiers of the deposed dictator Idi Amin, can count on support from refugees who fled into exile after Mr Amin was overthrown in 1979.

Tough t

James Meek meets Alexar...
asked might... a former general...
seeking election as governor...
resource-rich but penniless...
Siberia...
Yakutsk region of Siberia...
succeeds... his next goal is...
residency in the year 2000

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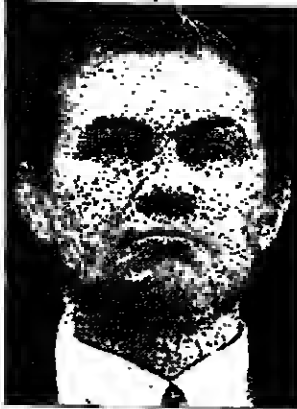
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Greatness in a nauseating smudge

Tough task on a cold campaign trail

James Meek meets Alexander Lebed (right), a former general seeking election as governor of the resource-rich but penniless Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia. If he succeeds, his next goal is the presidency in the year 2000



voice in the upper house of parliament, leverage as the champion of resource-rich Siberia against the greedy exploiters of Moscow, and access to the campaign moneybags of Krasnoyarsk's raw materials barons.

A defeat would be a near-fatal injury to his political career. He could become the saddest of political beings: an unpopular populist.

It is less than three years since Mr Lebed left the Russian army, after a period of service in which he emerged with honour from a series of catastrophes — Afghanistan, the Caucasus, the 1991 Moscow putsch, and Moldova, where he negotiated a ceasefire which still holds.

He wore a suit on his trips to Chechnya as secretary of President Boris Yeltsin's security council, but it was as one general to another that he cut a brave deal with Aslan Maskhadov which ended that conflict.

"I've learned a lot," he said in Aginskoye. "Not much remains of the general in me." Asked who his political heroes are, though, the list was strictly four-star. He

cited De Gaulle, Marshal Zhukov and Eisenhower.

"You can say what you like about Napoleon but he created a legal code which has operated for 200 years," he said.

"There are many people who by their will alone have forced the tide of events to turn in their favour. I intend to do the same in Russia."

Of Mr Lebed's two main opponents, the communist Pyotr Romanov, once road-tested by the party as an all-Russia leader, has failed to convince. The incumbent, Valery Zubov, a Yeltsin loyalist backed by the Moscow political establishment and ahead in the polls, is more of a challenge.

The Lebed campaign follows its timetable to the minute, an advantage in the wide empty spaces of Krasnoyarsk. The distance from the capital to the Arctic port of Dixon is the same as from London to St Petersburg.

The campaign day that included Aginskoye began with a television interview before the convoy — two white Volgas, a police car and a handful of Ladas — raced 80 miles through an unpeopled

landscape of crows and birches to the agricultural town of Uyar, where Mr Lebed addressed 500 indifferent Siberians at the House of Culture. He stood stiffly in a charcoal grey suit, legs apart, like a mannequin waiting a change of costume.

"Moscow has nothing except money," he said. "Krasnoyarsk has everything ex-

cept money. What's the use of the territory having gold if it can't spend it?"

Another 55 miles of birches to Angarskoye. Here Mr Lebed lived up as villagers pressed in around him on the main square.

"First question: do you live or just exist?" Mr Lebed asked. "Exist!" moaned a few souls. "Is Krasnoyarsk a rich region?" "Rich!" "So why do we live so badly?" Mutter-

ing. "Who the hell knows!"

Mr Lebed does not hide his intention to use Krasnoyarsk as a springboard for the presidency in 2000, but tells voters he will fall in Russia unless he can prove himself as governor of this region. His campaign message — patriotic, pro-market — centres on the paradox that Krasnoyarsk is

plenty of people waiting at the gate for your job."

"I'm a specialist in crisis management," said Mr Lebed. "There's a crisis in Russia today so I'm in the right place."

He sees democracy and the rule of law as things he has been chosen by destiny to clear a way for, not ideas he has to work within.

"I consider democracy is appropriate for Russia, but I don't consider Russia today is a democracy."

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"DON'T get any pleasure out of this," said Alexander Lebed. The notorious deep in his chest. "It's necessary work which, today, I have to do. It's unpleasant, it's dirty, but I've got to do it. There's no other way. We've come too far."

Outside it was dark and frosty. Most voters in the village of Aginskoye had long since dispersed to their log

houses. A bonfire stoked by a medley of youths and drunks made the flanks of Mr Lebed's limo gleam. It was 10pm and he still had 90 miles to travel along rural Siberian roads to reach the next campaign stop.

By dirty work he meant working the hustings. Two years after coming third in presidential elections, the popular former paratrooper general is looking for votes again, in a closely-watched poll that many commentators say is in effect the first round of the 2000 presidential race.

At stake on April 26 is the governorship of Krasnoyarsk Territory, a vast slice of Siberia containing much of Russia's present and future wealth in oil, wood and gold. If Mr Lebed wins it will be difficult to traverse the northern hemisphere without crossing land managed by his family: his younger brother Alexei, another hasoon-voiced ex-para, is governor of Khakassia, the region next door.

Greatness in a 'nauseating smudge'

Jon Henley and Ariane Wilson in Paris

A RECORD 11 exhibitions with more than 700 works celebrate this month the bicentenary of the birth of an artist whose style was described in his lifetime as a "nauseating smudge".

Eugene Delacroix, born in the south-eastern suburbs of Paris in 1798, is one of the best-known names of 19th-century art, but he inspired vicarious contemporary criticism.

"Delacroix's case is puzzling," said Vincent Pomarède, the curator of an exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris. "He had influential contacts in the establishment, so was not a marginal artist, despite the scathing criticism of his work."

The exhibitions at museums around France aim to show that it was the great variety of his work that confused the critics.

Delacroix was a Classicist, a Romantic, a herald of

in Paris is showing his prints illustrating literary works, including a haunting 1827 sequence based on Goethe's *Faust*.

The exhibition in Rouen reviews the years before 1840, when Delacroix's passionate style was influenced by the father of French Romanticism, Théodore Géricault, for whose *Raft of Medusa* (1819) he posed.

The first painting Delacroix exhibited at the Paris Salon three years later shows Dante and Virgil in a similar setting. No one much liked it.

"He paints with a drunken broom," was a characteristic response, and the word *tartoullade* (nauseating smudge) was coined to describe his incoherent use of paint.

He went even wilder with colour after accompanying an imperial mission to Morocco two years after France's conquest of Algeria. Literature and the Orient inspired him until his death in 1863.

Ariette Serruaz, curator of the Delacroix Museum in Paris, which has an exhibition of watercolours, said: "The last decade of his life has been overlooked, because it does not fit the Romantic label. It was a time of self-questioning, of a return to past models and, at the same time, of experimentation with free touches of colour which influenced the Impressionists."

The Grand Palais exhibition focuses on his last 15 years, when he painted religious subjects, landscapes and flowers. As his health faded, he produced savage animal scenes. His *Lion Hunt*, commissioned for the 1855 World Fair, was too violent and garish to be appreciated other than as a "grotesque aberration".

But he continued to be offered major commissions, including a chapel in the Church of St Sulpice. His last paintings were disliked by most. But shortly after his death, buyers flocked to a 15-day sale which included 6,000 drawings. In 1893 he was finally honoured with a monument in Paris.



Exhibitions around France aim to show that it was the great variety of Delacroix's work that confused the critics. Dante and Virgil (1822), above, shown in Rouen, was influenced by Géricault's *Raft of Medusa* (1819). Tobias and the Angel, left, drawn the year before his death is exhibited at the Grand Palais in Paris. An earlier work, *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* (1826), is a rare evocation of contemporary events



French cauli war blooms again

Paul Webster in Paris

B RITANNY'S cauliflower war is about to burgeon after a holiday weekend truce. Growers announced new protests yesterday to follow the attacks in which they dumped tons of unwanted heads to disrupt railway traffic throughout western France.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds of damage was caused in the first round as the growers, clashing with riot police, focused on disrupting the super-speed TGV train service from Paris to Brest.

They burnt signal wires, forcing the state railways to organise fleets of buses to serve holiday resorts like Quimper.

Although an Easter truce was called, it is expected to take engineers about a fortnight to repair the damage to equipment around the Brittany capital, Rennes.

The FDEA farmer's union secretary-general in Brittany, Thierry Merret, said the growers had nothing to lose by stepping up their violent protests.

"We have only just started. The government has turned a deaf ear to our difficulties. Cauliflowers are our main crop, but prices are so low that growers are having to live on 75 per cent less than 15 years ago," — about £3,000 pounds to £5,000 a year.

Growers said about a quarter of the 100 million cauliflowers produced in Brittany would have to be dumped because of the drop in prices in the past two months.

The price had fallen to about 14p each because of a glut caused by warm late winter weather. About 5,000 smallholders depend on cauliflowers for their income.

The agriculture minister, Louis Le Penec, said there was no possibility of extra aid.

The growers were already receiving about £7.7 million from the European Union and a further £5 million from French sources.

But Jean-François Jacob, chairman of the local young farmers' committee, said the growers intended to get tougher.

"Mr Le Penec has no idea of what is going on — he just flips through his files when we're defending a way of life."

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

NEW Labour's continuing failure to find a candidate to beat Ken Livingstone to the party's nomination for Mayor of London forces Diary pundit Steptoe to make one positively final comeback. The West Highland terrier, now three, is best known for his crushing defeat of Channel 4 racing presenter Derek Thompson (TV's Thommo, 45) in the Great Tipster Stakes. However his grasp of politics is considerable, and it is on the express invitation of the Cabinet Office that he has formed the following book. The dog makes Frank Dobson narrow favourite at 100-30, with Trevor Phillips and Bernie Ecclestone at 7-2. Chris Smith is a 9-2 shot, with android MP Helen Birtom, Oxf Wegg-Fraser and a pair of silk underpants worn by Rupert Murdoch on a recent visit to Downing Street all at 7-1. At 16-1 are Glenda Jackson and the chief executive of tobacco manufacturer Philip Morris, while the each way value lies with 33-1 chance the late Arthur Askey. Lord Jenkins, Mick Hucknall, Harriet Harman and Grand National winner Earth Summit are all at 66-1. The rank outsider is cerebral sports minister Tony Banks, whom Steptoe quotes at 500-1.

ONLY last week my sane and rational friend Paul Johnson wrote to the Guardian, comely feigning anger at my suggestion that A History Of The American People (Black Books, £25) contains "myriad howlers". Paul (whose biography a colleague and I hope to publish on November 2, the dear old fellow's 70th birthday) alerted us to a letter praising the scarcity of errors which he has received from Accuracy in Academia — a bunch of frothing, quasi-McCarthyite paranoiacs, brief research revealed, and a laughing stock even among the American right. Its founder and director is one Richard Melton Seale, Mr Seale, it now emerges, is to be investigated over possible tampering with a prosecution witness in the Whitewater affair. Most intriguing.

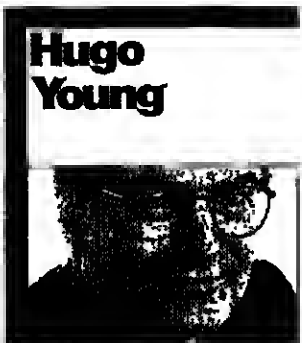
AN exciting development has been noted in the press release the Government's policy unit puts out each day celebrating its achievements. Last Thursday, for the first time, Daily Brief was sponsored. The publicistropic company is Deloitte & Touche, accountants who played a central role in the Thatcherite privatisations.

I AM impressed by Gyles Brandreth's diary of the last days of Tory rule in the Sunday Telegraph. A highly effective whip — he would threaten recalcitrant Eurosophes with a glimpse of his humorous sweaters — Gyles is no Alan Clark, but he paints a poignant portrait of a crumbling administration. The most touching recollection is of Brian Mahon, the Tory chairman, chairing a policy meeting in which a minister mentioned the issue of adoption. "Ah yes," says Mahon, "We may not like the fact that adoption is a political issue, but there's no escaping it." "Adoption, Brian, adoption, it's all the same..."

GYLES also mentions a minister who missed a crucial vote. "I think we can guess where he is," he records. "A little earlier I heard him boasting: 'I've got some right high class shank tonight. I'm going to take her home and knob her right.' The date was January 28, 1997, and we will be checking the voting record today."



In Ireland, for once, politicians have taught the cynics a lesson



Hugo Young

POLITICAL journalists owe it to their readers to keep open the richest storehouse of cynicism. It's our duty, as we say, and sometimes, as we don't say, our pleasure. You should never be left unapprised of the second-guessing, the triple subtextual meaning, behind what you might otherwise be in danger of supposing is really going on. Not believing politicians is our stock-in-trade, and casting doubt on the bona fides of their words has been magnified, as a branch of the professional task, in direct proportion to colonisation of our territory by the words-manipulators with whom they now surround themselves.

On the matter of Northern Ireland, this protective mission reaches unique levels of gloomy piety. The cynics have been writing the same stuff for years, and cannot stop. After pausing for a rapid intake of breath at what happened on Good Friday, they wiped out token optimism by resuming their easier function as the Cassandra who believe that peace negotiations should never have been started in the first place. The ultimate cynicism, for which Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien has been as reliable a spokesman as any, says that the very act of talking and trying to settle makes real peace more distant is, indeed, some kind of betrayal in itself.

Since nobody ever went broke overstating the negative power of history in Irish affairs, this may be quite understandable. But it seems, on this occasion, a pathetically sterile response. We all have our duty to be aware of the distance that must be travelled before the Good Friday document is converted into a proven peace contract. The disillusioning of the reader is

a necessary function. But, among the deepest dyed minds, there's a vested intellectual interest in the process being shown once again to fail. One can almost hear the salivating, as Unionism perhaps divides and Sinn Féin possibly loses the IRA. Terrorists are not the only people more interested in the politicians being proved right than wrong.

But the process so far has been a triumph for the politicians. Last week, we saw a group of them functioning at the highest level of their art. They did things that commentators could never do, to which the assignment of corrupt and cynical motives seems singularly misplaced. Naturally, they must be ready for things to go wrong; and obviously, they each have their plans for the longer game. But what happened was one of the least duplicitous congresses of political reality currently on display anywhere. Everything, at a certain level, was on the table, mutually and openly revealed.

There was no disguising the concessions the main parties had to make. These may be open to different interpretations, as they need to be if a grand majority coalition is to be won for the deal. But the nationalists have surrendered their claim to the unification of Ireland without consent: a massive reversal of history. They have also conceded a political structure in Ulster where the majority will not be denied their power. The Unionists, for their part, have yielded a crucial portion of their tribal absolutism, in exchange for the Union being guaranteed. And the politicians at the head of both these groups have taken risks with history that are the acme of leadership.

Presiding over their work, along with the Taoiseach, was a politician with less at risk but just as much at stake. Tony Blair made use of his risk-free position with consummate skill. He was the only man at the table, apart from George Mitchell, who did not have to watch his back. His constituency, he knew, would settle for anything, a luxury which no British prime minister has enjoyed for the 30 years of the present troubles, each of this man's predecessors being either in back to the Ulster Unionists at Westminster, or disqualified from imagining the kind of deal that has now been done. But a lesser man could still have blown it, instead of supplying the hands-on negotiator's creativity, combined with a capacity to inspire trust at decisive moments, which signals Mr Blair to be a man worthy of the massive parliamentary majority that gives him the privilege to do something with his job.

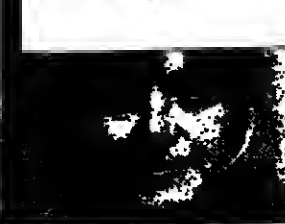
WHAT these politicians created together was a context in which the Irish majority can now speak. We have heard a great deal about this majority being in favour of peace and reconciliation, of an end to violence. Now it will have its chance to show it's serious. Popular majorities are tricky, and capable of saying contradictory things. But in Ireland, north and south, they haven't previously been able to demonstrate that they really do wish to marginalise the old extremes, and unite against the diabolical marriage which will now take place between the unregenerates of Union and Nation.

I bear the cynics relishing this moment. It will prove, will it not, that they were right all along? It will endorse their pessimism, underwrite their worldly wisdom, confirm their reading of history. And the chances of such hideous validation — if not immediately, then later — cannot be ruled out. Maybe there will be large Yes majorities in the referendum, to be followed by displays of bad faith among jockeying factions whose renunciation of extreme positions is only skin-deep. Scenario-building, wherein Sinn Féin/IRA take up the gun and overturn the established order, is a game not hard to play. The early release of convicted murderers will be particularly hard for many observers, including this one, to swallow: the most extreme concession to the deformities of Ulster, that can apparently be met only by this equal abrogation of the rules. The pounding of those, in print and out, who cannot abide the thought of a political settlement built on promises, will be heard with ever more triumphal blackness between now and referendum day, May 22.

But, believing otherwise, politicians have taught commentators a lesson. This is no less than we require of them. The making of such deals, and the taking of such risks, are what they alone can do. John Taylor, the Unionist MP, wrote here yesterday of the ease with which he could have denounced everything Mitchell brokered, and the cheers he would have got. It's the same on the other side. What he, like Gerry Adams, has done instead is take a stand for something larger than his doomed constituency. They create a moment for the shaming of those who said Ulster would always fight, and that anything else could only make Ulster fight some more.

Out for approval

Ros Coward



THIS Easter hasn't been so much happy as gay. Newspapers have featured the details of George Michael's "outing" and revelations about a woman losing custody of her grandchild to an uninvited lesbian. The BBC devoted three nights to establishing Noel Coward as a gay icon; and the Archbishop of Canterbury had his Easter Sermon disrupted by gay rights protesters.

The received liberal response tends to be that the straight establishment deserves these shocks. Since gays still face discrimination, anything which reminds the public of their existence has to be OK. But perhaps because I happened to be at the disrupted service in Canterbury Cathedral, I found my usual response fraying. Instead I found myself wondering why moderate gay campaigners don't dissociate themselves from some of the master practices and inappropriate activities sheltering under their mantle.

Doubtless the Canterbury protest was rationalised as gaining maximum publicity by disrupting the high point of the Christian year. It would expose the hypocrisy of a religion which is supposed to preach tolerance and acceptance. As someone who regularly mutters that Christianity would be alright if it wasn't for the Christians, I ought to sympathise with such views. In fact I think they are crass and insensitive. People don't go to church for a kind of AGM where the boss is called to account for the company's equal ops programme or the latest amendments to civic legislation.

I certainly wasn't there looking for intellectual coherence. The Church of England is so anti-intellectual the one thing you can be sure of is that sermons will be unthinkingly banal. But I like Canterbury Cathedral and the Easter imagery and music, like others there, it was matters of the spirit that engaged me, not politics. When Peter Tatchell's aggrieved voice rang out I was dragged from reveries about the symbolism of Easter, about friends and relatives who had died, and about my favourite film, A Canterbury Tale. Most of the congregation seemed similarly unquiescent, words like "lesbian", "discrimination", "gay marriage" shaking them out of quiet introspection. It was some moments before the unconscious mischief took over, providing a few with the wildly inappropriate chant of "out, out, out".

Interestingly, what bothered many after words was not gay rights but why the issue was gay marriage. One couple complained that if they, as liberal

Christians, weren't married "on principle", why on earth were gays pressing for this "right"? Dr Carey himself is ambiguous about marriage: two of his children are divorced and remarried. One of them only married in the first place when already pregnant. He may be hot on responsibilities but he's not particularly judgmental. But it's typical of many recent gay "rights" protests that they have more to do with individuals wanting public approval for their sexual choices than with connecting to other liberal political forces at play. And it's no coincidence either that the church is so often the focus for this kind of protest. In most areas of public and political life, gays and lesbians have equal opportunities. If gays want to get "married" they can organise their own secular ceremony, as many non-religious people already do for expressing commitments or naming their children. The church is not that important in setting the parameters of how we live, who we live with or what it means. But it is the ultimate place to find an approving or disapproving superego. If it's approval from a father figure (a heavenly father figure at that) then this is the place to go. This kind of protest is far more about seeking approval than civil rights.

Many of the current stances around gay behaviour seem ultimately motivated by this need for "straight" society to approve everything connected with gay lifestyle, and criticisms are derided as homophobia. So no one takes issue with George Michael describing his behaviour as mere weakness, nothing to be ashamed of, because liberals are not meant to criticise an oppressed group which has had to evolve its own sexual codes and practices. But is it really OK to masturbate in a place where anyone, not just other gays, could come in, including kids or men ambiva-

When Tatchell's voice rang out I was dragged from Easter reveries

lent about their sexuality? If gay men want to know where homophobic attitudes start they should recognise that some individuals who have had experiences like this often do not like it.

Perhaps it's inevitable that gay politics includes this regressive demand for approval: the feeling that one's sexuality is unacceptable, and disapproved of, leaves a long lasting effect. But there are different ways of dealing with it. Peter Tatchell's real preoccupations are gaining the ultimate patriarchal approval for under-age sex. A psychoanalyst could undoubtedly explain why, but in the meantime his antics should be seen for what they are rather than a perfectly acceptable part of an anti-discrimination programme. If the gay rights movement doesn't no longer need to set in, they should distance themselves from the likes of Tatchell once and for all.

The Home Secretary is wrong to seek police exemption from a law on freedom of information

Secrets and files

Richard Norton-Taylor

JACK Straw is a sensible, decent man. So he has either been got at, or he has a blind spot. He insists that MI5 — along with MI6 and GCHQ — must be "completely excluded" from the planned Freedom of Information Act. Not only that. He is adamant that all police operations, indeed anything to do with law enforcement, should be excluded. As the white paper puts it, "the Act will exclude information relating to the investigation and prosecution functions of the police, prosecutors, and other bodies carrying out law enforcement work such as the Department of Social Security or the Immigration Service".

In response to persistent questioning last week by Tory and Labour members of the Commons public administration committee, Mr Straw said: "Given the nature of the Security Service, I don't believe any part of what they do should be part of a freedom of information regime". The independent Tory, Richard Shepherd, and the new (but not so new) Labour MP, Peter Bradley, then asked why each matters as deaths in police custody or police handling of football crowds, like the Hillsborough disaster, should not be covered by the proposed Act.

Mr Shepherd pointed out that Stephen Lawrence's family had not been able to see the full Police Complaints Authority reports into their son's death. Mr Bradley said it was not a question of having prior disclosure about details of police operations, merely having the right afterwards

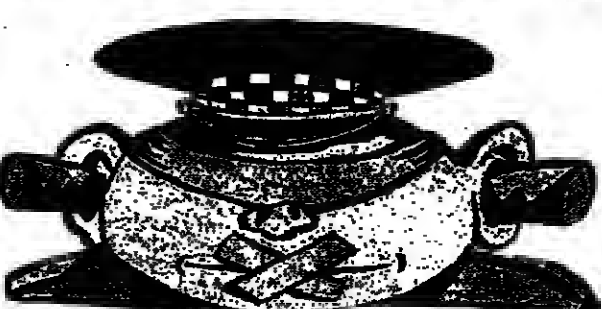
to the truth about what had happened. Mr Straw would have none of it. Any information relating to such issues must remain a matter for existing complaints procedures or "judicial proceedings". In other words, it must remain a matter of discretion — that of the police, or unelected quangos, or judges. An Act that would put the onus on those who possess the information to justify its disclosure would be "too dangerous", he said. Under current plans, the police will be exempt from the Public Interest Disclosure Bill — designed to protect genuine whistleblowers even though avoiding "misleading or unjustified" use of its explicit abuse. The Government, meanwhile, is insisting that the Data Protection Bill should include exemptions that would give the police freedom to hold sensitive personal data on any individual on such matters as political opinions and sexual life. Police in all other EU countries are bound by strict rules allowing them to hold sensitive data only when it is "absolutely necessary for the purposes of a particular inquiry".

Exemptions in the Bill would allow the security and intelligence agencies to ignore requirements that data held on individuals must be "relevant" to the agencies' activities, "accurate and kept up to date" and "fairly and lawfully" processed. Liberty, the civil rights group, says that the

lack of controls over data held by the police and law enforcement agencies would enable them to hold inaccurate information which could have a "devastating" effect on an individual's life. And so back to MI5. Two Tory members of the public administration committee — David Ruffley and Andrew Tyrie — had a lot of fun quizzing Mr Straw about the threatened destruction of the 250,000 or so files MI5

holds on individuals it once considered subversive. It was part of a campaign promoted by their Tory colleague Julian Lewis, shaker of skeletons in the (Old Labour cupboard, who accuses such (New) Labour stalwarts as Peter Mandelson — on whom MI5 holds a file of trying to "brush" history by getting rid of tell-tale MI5 files. It is a serious issue, of course. Mr Straw said it was

entirely a matter for MI5, adding that he would happily leave it to MI5 to decide whether to keep or destroy its files on him. Files should be kept for genuine historical interest. But how many, and whose? And if they are made available in 30 years or so, should not the individual concerned have a veto on their disclosure, or at least an opportunity to correct inaccuracies? MI5's work, said Mr Straw, "would be rendered impossible if the subjects of those files have access to them". That cannot be right if MI5 has decided to get rid of tens of thousands of files on the grounds that they are no longer needed. If they are no longer relevant to its work, why cannot MI5's past targets see what it had on them (blacking out names of informers if necessary)? The answer is that MI5 does have something to hide. The question remains: why?



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The Guardian

Tuesday April 14 1998
Edition Number 47148
119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER
Fax No. 0171-837 4530
E-mail: letters@guardian.co.uk
Website: http://www.guardian.co.uk

Greasing the Duma

Yeltsin rules: at a price

WHO RULES Russia? Yesterday it was Boris Yeltsin in his most decisive presidential mode. Urged by the Duma to reconsider his proposal for the new prime minister he replied that "they know their president: there will be no other candidate". Asked whether he would, if necessary, dissolve the Duma, he noted with emphasis that he was "not using this phrase (dissolution) now". Invited to change the constitution so that the leader of the upper house would succeed him in case of emergency, he insisted that "there will be no changes ... so long as I'm the president". Those in the West who regard Boris as their best bet will be taking heart: he is asserting his pre-eminence as vigorously as if he were party general secretary in times gone by.

Mr Yeltsin may also have set an exciting new precedent yesterday by being the first leader of an important nation to bribe his legislature in public. He invoked the name of Pavel Borodin, a presidential aide in charge of distributing apartments, cars and other goodies to parliamentarians. Mr Borodin, he said, had been told to be helpful provided the deputies showed a constructive approach. The aide would be waiting till Friday — the probable date for the next attempt to secure the Duma's approval for Sergei Kiriyenko. "They know what it's all about," said Mr Yeltsin with a nudge.

Mr Kiriyenko, it should be acknowledged, has made quite a positive showing since he emerged from relative obscurity as Mr Yeltsin's nominee. His experience in

government is limited to less than a year at the energy ministry. But many Russians believe that someone of the younger entrepreneurial generation may make a better job of it — or at least cannot do any worse. He has already indicated he will seek to curb the excesses of reform, paying more regard to the quarter of the population — about 32 million people — who now earn less than the recognised subsistence wage. He has spoken frankly about the looming crisis in which unless something is done 70 per cent of the budget will go to service Russia's debts by the year 2000. He has appealed to local interests by talking of the need to reapportion tax revenues so that more is returned to the provinces. It is also clear that the main opposition parties in the Duma are not implacably opposed to Mr Kiriyenko: they simply set a price on their support. Since the alternative, constitutionally, if he is thrice rejected, would be dissolution of parliament, the odds are in favour of a deal, if not in time for a second round, then before the final throw.

The real problem is whether Mr Kiriyenko can contend with the hidden forces behind the Russian state and produce some useful results. This is where the question "who rules Russia?" may get a different and more credible response. The answer which most Russians would give is relayed in an article in the current issue of Chatham House's *The World Today*. It is that Russia is now run by a small circle of businessmen headed by the famous "Group of Seven" financiers. The article carries the apposite title "Robbing Russia." The most powerful of the seven, Boris Berezovsky, boasts that they represent the "bare fangs of capitalism" and control 50 per cent of the country's natural resources.

Mr Berezovsky was assumed at first to be behind the ousting of the last prime minis-

ter Viktor Chernomyrdin, having fallen out with him over preparations for the last of the great oil sell-offs — the Rosneft state company. But it was Mr Kiriyenko during his short tenure in the energy ministry who helped set the Rosneft terms. His future even if he passes the Duma test now looks that much less secure.

Ulster's real test

It's not arms but belief in peace

NO NEWS is good news, says the old adage, and it seemed true enough in Northern Ireland yesterday. There was relief that those watching the Apprentice Boys' march along the Lower Ormeau Road had nothing to report. Two years ago a Unionist parade in a Catholic area touched off trouble; yesterday, it passed without incident. The Apprentice Boys took the guidance of the parades commission and turned back before they reached the danger-zone.

It was a small gesture but a valuable one. Optimists will see it as a sign that last Friday's breakthrough has dramatically altered the mood in Northern Ireland. But it is too early for such thoughts. There will be 3,500 marches this year, mostly organised by groups without the flexibility of the Apprentice Boys. On July 12 the Orange Order plans to maintain its custom of marching along the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road in Portadown, an event guaranteed to arouse apprehension. The chief constable of the RUC, Ronnie Flanagan, probably had this in mind yesterday when he warned that there was "still scope for potential disorder". Now it is up to the Orangemen to see if they can follow the lead set by the Apprentice Boys.

That same spirit should inform the de-

bate on decommissioning. Followers of the painfully slow peace process will be forgiven their sense of *deja vu* as, once again, the handover of paramilitary weapons becomes a major sticking point. The issue was revived this time by John Major in a weekend interview. The former prime minister deserves credit for his early role in the process, but this latest intervention was hardly helpful. Instead of boosting Northern Ireland's hopes, he stirred Unionist fears by conjuring the prospect of Sinn Féin taking its place in a new assembly while keeping an "armalite under the table". It's odd that Mr Major should have brought up such a sensitive question at so delicate a time. He of all people knows the obstructive power of the decommissioning issue.

So it now falls to the peacemakers to defuse the matter. The most persuasive argument may be the one put yesterday by John Hume. For him, decommissioning is not really the point: if the hardmen are playing games, they can hand in weapons on a Monday only to buy new ones in secret on a Tuesday. The important test is whether the ex-paramilitaries are truly committed to peace and democracy — and that will take time. Granting them that time — as well as a face-saving way to hand over arms without the appearance of surrender — is a risk. But, for the sake of peace, it's surely a risk worth taking.

Turgid termites

Gnawing at our foundations

THE TERMITE is the Jekyll and Hyde of the insect world. On a good day it fulfils a vital function by eating decaying or dead wood and recycling it into useful nutrients. On a bad day it does exactly the same thing

— only to houses and other wood structures because no one has taught it the difference.

Once they have found themselves some tasty wood, termites are incredibly self-sufficient. They live where they eat and they eat where they live. They never need to phone for a take-away. And that's the trouble. In warmer countries like the United States they wreak more havoc than fire and flooding put together. The toughest of the breed (Formosan termites) can devour their way through bricks and mortar and even concrete to get to wood in order to satisfy their habit. Several years ago they even had the affrontery to gnaw at the roots of democracy itself — the Statue of Liberty which suffered severe infestations in the base of the monument housing the museum.

For centuries Britain, which hasn't been invaded by any foreign bodies since 1066, has been able to sport a stiff upper lip on the subject of termites: they were always someone else's problem. Not any more. As we reported yesterday, these outsize ants have been caught trying to colonise a part of north Devon though the exact location is being kept secret to protect local estate agents. Scientists say that termites in Britain have been nurtured by the same global warming that has brought us dolphins frolicking in the sea in April off Lyme Regis. But explanation isn't enough. We must have a cure. What we need is a national termite policy. No longer should they be allowed to gnaw away at home (and at homes). In this day and age they must either change their diet or go out into the world and do wood-eating for the community. Otherwise we will miss the chance to chip away at Nature's version of the dependency culture and welfare-to-work will be a gnawing failure.

Letters to the Editor

From Domes to condoms

I GOT as far as "Lord" Baker is an intellectual giant among politicians (Domes-laden, G2, April 13) — and threw up. But Stephen Bayley should have stayed with the project. We need something on the Dome's scale to house his ego. John Dady, Taunton, Somerset.

HEZZA and Mandy, Bill and Ben under the Millennium dustbin, are united by their appalling lack of imagination. Ian Campbell, Ynyslas, Dyfed.

AFTER visiting the Festival of Britain (Letters, April 13) we went to Ernest Race, the designer, and bought a couch, armchairs and a rocking chair. I still have great affection for them and visitors can't believe they were designed in 1951. Jacqueline Ennals, London.

A SCIENTIFIC explanation based on Sumnerian writings for the creation of our heaven and earth and the dividing of the water between them (Scientists discover water in space, April 9) is detailed in Zacharia Sitchin's book *The 12th Planet*. The writers of the Hebrew Genesis later adapted the Babylonian version. A case of science and religion catching up with ancient knowledge, perhaps (Letters, April 9). Philip King, London.

THE amazement of the scientists was as nothing compared to the joy of the people of Yorkshire when finally the fate of the water that leaked from Yorkshire Water's defective water system became known. F A Becht, Aberdeen.

CHARDONNAY and "something for the weekend", an unusual shopping trend (Retailer's guide to the weekend, April 13). Condons make excellent six-right sealers for half-drunk bottles of wine. Peter Bird, Falkenberg, Norfolk.

FURTHER to recent letters, I'll fax you a very brief note, following all the tips, what chance of publication on Monday (or even Tuesday)? Kay Steward (799), Chair, One-woman Creative Correspondence Committee.

Tactical errors in schools debate

THOSE who presume to question government proposals on education are still smeared as "militants" or "Trots". What is so depressing is that the Guardian engaged in these smears (Leader, April 13).

I leave little to do with the education system, but it is clear that there are profound concerns about proposals for education action zones and other changes.

Instead of discussing the implications, you took the easy way out. You just labelled those who reject the proposal as, so seeking to invalidate their concerns by undermining their right to express them. These are tabloid tactics.

It is disturbing that voices cannot be raised against particular policies without being caricatured in this way.

This disallows discussion and marginalises people. If it is teachers today, who will it be tomorrow? Linda Lennard, London.

WHY does Stuart Lester (Letters, April 11) imagine that ending selection will mean children being directed to a particular school by bureaucratic diktat?

Using Orwellian catch-phrases doesn't change the fact that children are usually "allocated" places by the LEAs' admission policies. Where there is no pecking order, these allocations are difficult but manageable.

Where there is a variety of schools with spurious "choice" the outcome is often heartache for many children and parents. There would be more money for the schools if the bureaucracy forced on to many authorities was reduced. Bob Tutton, NUT conference, Blackpool.

I WAS surprised to read about David Blunkett's plans for the future of the education system and of the concerns of teachers on the issues of workload and red tape. As a teacher working in the

state sector in Scotland, I already belong to a General Teaching Council: it was promoted to the position of senior teacher, designed to keep excellent teachers in the classroom; and I work under a contract of employment that states a maximum class size of 33 and limits the amount of non-teaching tasks that I can be asked to do.

Perhaps before Mr Blunkett goes any further he should speak to his colleagues at Westminster to find out how the teaching profession in the rest of Britain operates. M G Barry, Renfrewshire.

MARGARET Hodge MP recently called for a return to payment by results in education. She should consult the opinion of a chief inspector of schools who experienced an earlier attempt at this clumsy measure. Edmund Holmes, who retired in 1910, recognised that a national curriculum and payment by results were

bound together. The former furnished material for regular examinations; the latter enabled the results to be turned into a convenient, apparently objective, sliding scale of remuneration.

But, says Holmes, the system obscured the true purposes of education. In his book *What Is and What Might Be*, Holmes speaks of the "tendency [of the examination system] to arrest growth, to deaden life, to paralyse the higher faculties ... to involve education in an atmosphere of unreality and self-deception."

There is still a little time left in which to think again. Christopher R Shute, Polesworth, Staffs.

More Marmite addictions

WE TOO have a soo who appears to exist solely on Marmite, plus chocolate, bourbon biscuits, Ribena, occasional orange juices or diet cola, and whatever milk he has in tea (Marmite diet baffles boffins, April 9). He, too, is a keen sportsman and, of our four children, he has less days off school. Perhaps this phenomenon is not so unusual. Brian Partridge, Maidstone, Kent.

THIS boffin was baffled by your piece. The main ingredient of sandwiches is bread, the "staff of life" and a rich source of fibre and protein, vitamins and minerals. With his occasional orange juice, milk, fromage frais, nuts and raisins, young Daniel probably has a far superior diet to that of most of his age peers. Just think — no burgers, no soft parovets, no crisps ... Dr Chris Allen, Herne, Kent.

MY SON has grown up on a similar diet and is now 18. I consulted various people including a homoeopath, dietitian and a psychologist. About 11 years ago an article was published in *the* magazine about an 8-year-old Marmite sandwich-eater. A newsletter was started by one of the boys' parents (the Marmites were nearly all the odds). Dolly Parton has been married to one Carl Dean for the past 33 years. The tumultuous years Wynette spent with George Jones were probably the cause of her finest recordings and live performances. Yet, for all that she suffered in those years, she was not as prolific a writer of songs as many other country singers. But then there were plenty of writers to realise her ideas, none more so than Billy Sherrill.

Her material can be divided in three. There was pre-Jones, comprising deserted wife songs, kiddy songs or loyal wife songs; there was post-Jones romance and agony, comprising deserted wife songs, kiddy songs or loyal wife songs; there was post-Jones romance and agony, comprising deserted wife songs, kiddy songs or loyal wife songs.

FOR ME, it was marmite toast. Since going to university I've managed to break free of this addiction, despite having a jar readily to hand. I wasn't a student, I'd be a perfectly healthy and rational adult. Bridget Floyer, London.

I AM shocked by the publication of Erin Pizzey's untrue and damaging letter (April 8). Neither I personally, nor the organisation that I belonged to — the London Women's Liberation Workshop — was ever to my knowledge engaged in planning or conducting bombing attempts outside the M25 World contest or the Post Office Tower or anywhere else, or in any other acts of violence. Sally Alexander, London.

CATHERINE Bennett, referring to an article on the breakdown of my marriage, suggested (Barling, April 11) that I believed the union of Della and Grant Bovey could still work. In fact, I clearly stated the opposite. Shyamna Perera, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters. The Country Diary is on page 10.

Lateness, landslides, dodgy bus trips. What next for rail?

LAST Thursday my son, aged 14, caught an Alpha train from Leamington at 17.42. After a change to a Great Western train at Newport, he was due at Paddington at 20.25. At 18.30 he borrowed a mobile phone to tell me there was flooding on the line, that he was delayed at Hereford station and would probably arrive in Paddington at 21.25.

That train was 25 minutes late and he wasn't on it. I asked at the information desk what had happened to the passengers on the delayed Hereford/Newport train and was told they could not possibly know what had happened to individual passengers. When, in my anxiety, I persisted, I was told my son would probably be on the next train from Newport at 23.10. He wasn't.

He was, thank heaven, on the last train from Swansea/Newport at 00.01. He told me stories of landslides, flooding rivers and seemingly dangerous trips on buses. When he changed trains at Newport

he was not informed where to go for the London train. Once on the right train, the ticket collector requested £5.50 more than the normal Supersaver fare due to inflated prices for Easter Thursday. His spare cash spent, he travelled for six-and-a-half hours with no food or drink, no detailed information and no compensation for the mismanagement. Back at Paddington, his elder brother and I froze on an unheated station. No café or restaurant was open and there was no information.

To whom should I complain? Alpha, Great Western, the three companies owning the trains he used, or Rail-track who own the track and stations? Why the lack of information for staff, passengers and those meeting passengers? Disgusting service all round. Whom does privatisation and fragmentation of the railways serve? Shirley Franklin, London.

Wacky baccy

WHY are your business journalists being so coy about the real reason why rolling one's own cigarettes is, to quote Julia Finch, "verging on the trendy" (Imperial's big roll-up, April 9)?

Any fool can tell you why this sector of the market is booming. Imperial Tobacco can't be unaware of the possibilities either. After all, they took over RZB before buying a tobacco business in Holland (see another clue).

Presumably they'll now target late-night petrol stations and the makers of KitKat and Pink Floyd albums. John Duncan almost hit the nail on the head when he mentioned that cigarette smokers have their favourite brands, but "roll-up smokers are much more choosy". Too right, but we ain't talking about tobacco. A G Roberts, Cardiff.

GARETH Davies of Imperial Tobacco is right to draw attention to the fact that 70 per cent of hand-rolling tobacco consumed this year will have been smuggled. The Tobacco Alliance, representing independent



retailers, believes the smuggling of tobacco and its illegal resale are undermining the independent retail industry and harming public finances. Tobacco sales make up about a quarter of the turnover of a corner shop. Many are being driven out of business. The incentive to smuggle arises from the differential in tobacco duty between Britain

and the European Union. For example, a packet of 20 cigarettes costs £3.36 in Britain but only £1.78 in Belgium. Also smugglers do not care to whom they sell tobacco, so children have greater access. The solution is harmonisation of tobacco taxes. Paul Mason, Tobacco Alliance, London.

Country matters

IN TAMMY Wynette's obituary (April 8) you reported that Dolly Parton was once married to Porter Wagoner. Sorry, against all the odds, Dolly Parton has been married to one Carl Dean for the past 33 years.

The tumultuous years Wynette spent with George Jones were probably the cause of her finest recordings and live performances. Yet, for all that she suffered in those years, she was not as prolific a writer of songs as many other country singers. But then there were plenty of writers to realise her ideas, none more so than Billy Sherrill.

Her material can be divided in three. There was pre-Jones, comprising deserted wife songs, kiddy songs or loyal wife songs; there was post-Jones romance and agony, comprising deserted wife songs, kiddy songs or loyal wife songs; there was post-Jones romance and agony, comprising deserted wife songs, kiddy songs or loyal wife songs.

Will Irish peace agreement herald break-up of the United Kingdom?

THE Northern Ireland peace agreement may usher in a new era of peace and stability (Terror risk to peace deal, April 13), but its implementation could bring the break-up of UK a step closer.

The main thrust of the agreement seems to be to help Northern Ireland evolve its own separate political identity, hence the emphasis on the removal of articles 2 and 3 from the Irish constitution, and the repeal of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, both of which link Northern Ireland either to the Irish Republic or to Britain.

entity of Northern Ireland has crystallised — and by then Britain, having joined EMU, would have forfeited much of its sovereignty — Northern Ireland, like Scotland, would have nothing to lose and everything to gain by becoming an independent constituent of the European Union.

The peace agreement, although a step in the right direction, is not without its long-term implications. Randhir Singh Bedra, London.

ARETHINK of attitudes to Europe would offer exciting possibilities. We need to

move beyond our political illiterate attitude to a European federal unit based on regions.

Imagine a situation in which England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and southern Ireland were contributing members of a federal Europe. And imagine the effects this would have on relationships between our communities.

The European Court could help resolve problems, and subsidiarity, together with social and economic convergence, could be powerful progressive forces. J K Turner, Telford, Shropshire.

IT SEEMS that little, if any, attention has been paid to the core problem of the six counties of Northern Ireland: that the electorate votes according to religious upbringing. As this is a matter of near absolute conviction, there is no room for democratic debate. So, for as long as decisions are limited to a majority of the Northern Ireland electorate, no real progress can be expected.

UK political parties should be trying to get people elected in Northern Ireland according to political beliefs, not religious allegiances. Arthur Worland, Huntingdon, Cambs.

DAVID Trimble is surely right to say that the Good Friday agreement will strengthen the union as well as provide a framework for peace in the province.

Covertly, a No vote in the referendum will lead to further disunion with Northern Ireland in Britain. A mood of "a plague on all their houses" will develop, not least because of the huge human and financial cost to the mainland of maintaining the union. Like all partnerships, the union needs consent from both sides of the Irish Sea. John O'Brien, Morpeth, Northumberland.

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Sir Ian MacGregor

The scourge of Scargill

THE motto of Clan MacGregor is "ever do and spare naught". It was one that perfectly fitted the long and turbulent career of Sir Ian MacGregor, who has died of a heart attack aged 65. He was, in succession, chairman of the British Steel Corporation and the National Coal Board, heading the latter during the great strike of 1984-1985 which divided the miners, the labour and trade union movement — and the country.

Sir Ian was a physically and mentally tough Scot who spent most of his working life with American companies. At vast expense to the Exchequer, he was head-hunted back to Britain under the Thatcher government to run the National Coal Board and drastically cut its mines and workers. His style precipitated in 1984 what was to be one of the worst miners' strikes of the century. Often he seemed determined to give the moral victory to his equally unpopular opponent, the National Union of Mineworkers' Arthur Scargill, whose hatred of the British class system he paradoxically shared. "In a war," said MacGregor, "a soldier has to shoot

to kill. Unfortunately I'm a soldier in that kind of war." This confirmed his reputation in liberal circles in Britain as one of the toughest hatchers and worst contritionists since Sir Eric Geddes (of the 1920s expenditure cuts). In the US, his attitudes were much more esteemed and he followed Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Orville Wright and Marconi in being awarded the Fritz Medal for services to industry.

When the call came to chair the NCB, he was over 70 and had a limited partnership in the New York bank of Lazard Frères. Rumours that he was going to take up the NCB chairmanship at £50,000 a year were greeted with incredulity. But MacGregor was already a multi-millionaire and, when his appointment was confirmed, made no secret of an urge to help British industry become more viable.

When, near the time his three-year (1983-1986) contract with the NCB was due to run out, the NCB made a record £2,200 million loss, Mrs MacGregor tried to hand him. It was widely rumoured that the Prime Minister had persuaded Ronald Reagan to offer MacGregor a job with the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, to get him off her hands. MacGregor confessed that after his experience with Washington "looked good" but he resisted all attempts to oust him.

Characteristically he later said: "To tell you the truth, I expected to be sacked at the time of the coal strike. But I had a strong case and I would have gone public on it. The Government knew that. I've never wanted to be a politician, but I can handle them."

The son of a Scots accountant and a schoolteacher mother, who brought her family up strictly in the United States, MacGregor was 14 at the time of the General Strike of 1926. He heard his father say: "A few union leaders should not be allowed to use their men to hold the country up to ransom." This simple code became his. His two elder brothers drove trucks in Glasgow to help break the strike.

His universities were Glasgow and the Royal College of Science and Technology. He went to Canada and then the US in 1940 to help arrange war supplies for Lord Beaverbrook's Ministry of Supply. As he later put it, he realised that the British class system wanted to make managers of Oxbridge graduates and technicians out of everyone else. He decided to stay and met his English-born wife, Sibyl, there. His children worked or married into the law. For a decade from 1967, MacGregor was chief executive and chairman of Amax, a multinational conglomerate. It traded in metals, ores and minerals. He introduced the company to coal production by acquiring Ayrshire Collieries in the US mid-west, the 11th largest American coal producer, in 1969. By the time he left the company it was the third largest in the US. Its annual output was 50 million tons. Amex sales went up by 900 per cent in a decade. In 1975 the company paid MacGregor £150,000 a year and his own shares in the company were worth nearly £2 million.

He revealed his blend of Mammon and moralising by becoming chairman of Religion in American Life, famous for its slogan: "The family that prays together, stays together." But his abrasive style was considered harsh by some, even in American business, and he fought long and hard against recognition of the United Mine Workers of America. The union fought back with an advertisement reading: "We all know Amex for what it is — a leader of anti-union activity throughout the nation."

Later, in 1979, MacGregor was commuting from the US as deputy chairman of British Leyland under the chairman Michael Edwards. He claimed to be responsible for selling the board to sack Derek Robinson, "Red Robbo", a Longbridge Birmingham shop steward. In 1980 he became chairman and chief executive of the British Steel Corporation. Again, mills were closed, workers sacked, and production cut in an effort to achieve profitability. His reward was a knighthood in 1986. He is survived by his son and daughter.

General Sir Frank King

Rewriting the manual

WHEN Frank King, who has died aged 79, was appointed GOC Northern Ireland and Director of Operations in February 1973, he inherited a demoralised police force and a garrison of soldiers struggling to develop tactics to cope with the debilitating effects of widespread civil disorder and political turmoil.

Although the Army had mounted Operation Motorman, its biggest land operation since the second world war, in July 1972 and now deployed a heavy presence in the most troubled areas, shooting attacks, bombings and sectarian murder, albeit at a reduced level, continued on a wide scale.

The Army brought in its most talented young officers to study the situation, in the process rewriting the manuals on urban guerrilla warfare to articulate the new doctrines of counter-terrorism and peace-keeping. King, who was frequently seen on the streets and at the scenes of incidents, brought his considerable expertise and encouragement to bear on this learning process. But in May 1974, with King firmly at the helm, the Army was taught a signal lesson about the full extent of conventional military impotence in situations like Northern Ireland.

The 1973 Sunningdale Agreement created a pioneering power-sharing executive at Stormont, enabling unionists and nationalists, for the first time, to share responsibility for governing Northern Ireland. It also contained provision to recognise the Irish dimension by forging formal cross-border administrative links. Hardline loyalists viewed these developments with alarm and plotted a new form of general strike to overthrow them.

Calculating that if the electricity supply was interrupted, a modern society could quickly be brought to its knees, extremists secretly sabotaged key workers in the power stations and launched a general strike in May 1974. As the effects of the power shutdown, and collateral intimidation, became progressively more catastrophic, farm animals and food supplies were interrupted. There was also the prospect of raw sewage spilling into the streets as the pumps failed. The Labour government, led by Harold Wilson, and his Ulster Secretary, Merlyn Rees, came under pressure from the fledgling executive to use the Army to confront the intimidators, distribute fuel and take over the power-stations to break the strike.

It fell to King to spell out the realities. Even if the military could run the complex electricity system and they could not be emphasised, there were not enough soldiers to put even one at every distribution pylon to prevent sabotage and ensure distribution. Similarly, there was little the Army could do to keep roads open and break the strike. "You can't go round shooting people because they want to do a certain thing," he said.

Within 14 days the exhausted and with it the hard-won political agreement. It was by far the most humiliating episode in the Army's 30-year campaign in Ulster.

Frank Douglas King, whose parents Arthur and Kate farmed in Berkshire, was educated at Wellington Grammar School. At the outbreak of war in 1939 he abandoned plans to farm and enlisted in the Army. In 1944, as a captain in the Parachute Regiment during the Arnhem landings, he was jumped from his burning glider at 300 feet as it was being sprayed with gunfire. He was later wounded and taken prisoner. After the war he saw further action in Cyprus, Bahrain and Kuwait and served in a wide range of commands. He left northern Ireland in 1972 and retired from Army three years later. He is survived by his wife, Joy Emily Ellen Taylor-Lane, whom he married in 1947, their son and two daughters.

Chiefs of Staff

General Sir Frank King, Director of Operations, Northern Ireland, born March 8, 1918; died March 30, 1998

Frank Tindall

Plans for a better way of life

WHEN I think of Frank Tindall, the Scottish town planner who has died aged 79, I imagine him being larger than he was — an indication of the effect of his generosity of spirit and bigness of heart. The elder in a pair of non-identical twins, he came from a line of architects, engineers and builders, including Sir Charles Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament.

Tindall was a civilising socialist of the old school, who believed in careful thought and planning and in the obligation of the better-off to use their advantage for the well-being of the less advantaged. Alongside this historicist, semi-Marxist view — he studied history at Clare College, Cambridge, after Tiffinham School — lay a unique insight into what we would now call ecology. A significant moment came while serving as a major in the closing months of the second world war. Frank had ordered

the felling of trees for use as fuel when an Austrian forester suggested that it was the mature, and not the young, trees which should be taken. Frank's *Memoirs*, which are to be published in the autumn, tell the story of the aspirations of postwar planning and show him as a visionary. Prewar, he had organised an undergraduate study tour of planning in Europe and his approach was concerned with balance and mutual responsibility. After study at the Town Planning Institute, Frank worked on the plan for Peterlee, the County Durham new town and at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. In 1950, he became East Lothian's planning officer and from 1955 until his 1985 retirement he was Lothian Regional Council's director of physical planning. Taking on a poor and rundown county, his ecological approach soon emerged. He understood the importance of conservation —

in contrast to preservation — and foresaw changes to local old industries. The fashion was to destroy old buildings but he used them for new purposes as with the mining museum at Prestongrange and Newtongrange. He also inspired Dutch techniques for dune preservation through planting grasses and shrubs, thus creating the beautiful coastal walks East Lothian now boasts. East Lothian's landscape, townscapes and quality of life owe much to his influence and the county town, Haddington, bears witness to his success.

He was instrumental in setting up Scotland's Nature Conservancy Council — for which he was awarded an OBE — and, in retirement, he developed natural forest at Stranraer, Abernethy, in Highlands, near the croft cottage he had enjoyed for so many years, winning in his last summer and to his great delight the Hunter Blair Trophy for outstanding forestry. He oversaw

the regeneration of the splendid estate at Bankton House: the house converted to viable flats, the gardens restored to their Georgian glory. But, in a way, his understanding of ecology is best expressed simply in the love of the land and its produce, of the possibilities it offered for creating delight and in the joy of achieving a sensitive and productive balance between humanity and nature that characterised his home and his garden.

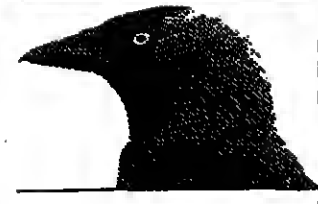
After his funeral I went to visit Haddington. The little town is still delicately coloured, the colours reflecting the scheme chosen by him and his architect-planner wife, Mary Miller, whose sensitivity and interests such as art, architecture and conservation had such a positive influence on him. It is not, of course, in the continuity of an old colour scheme that his triumph lies, but in influencing a way of thinking so that we would care about such an aspect of our environment.

Frank Tindall — care and concern for others

He was concerned for others — in the way he served fine wine generously, without limit, in infectious bonhomie, and gifts to visitors at his Midlothian home of his prized honey and home-grown vegetables, and in the way he listened. A generous and devoted father and grandfather, Frank Tindall is survived by Mary, whom he married nearly 50 years ago; their three children and four grandchildren, and his twin.

Ramphal Glenville

Jackdaw



God given

BEFORE each meal, Gwen Shamblin thanks the Lord for her daily bread, not to mention the ice-cream and chocolate cake she treats herself to on a regular basis. The 5ft 4in, 8st mother of two from Nashville in the US eats what she wants, when she wants and never gains weight — something she attributes to a power far greater than her metabolism.

shop, a Christian-based weight-loss programme that is offered through more than 18,000 churches across the US. "People think broccoli is righteous and fudge brownies are a sin," she says. "But God did not put chocolate on Earth to torture us. He created it, there is the fat stored in the sugar. I praise him when I eat it."

God is like a box of chocolates, a comforting post-Easter thought, from Zest.

enable people to tie the elastic round their legs and throw themselves from a great height: bungee jumping. So what about bungee jumping? The cold psychological view would be that it's caught on because young men feel their hairy-chested sexual role to be threatened in an age of female liberation and therefore reconstruct it symbolically. After all, it derives from a Pentecost island ritual of

masculinity where men tie linens to their ankles and leap off a bamboo scaffold. (Usually they do it in the dry season when the vines are green and stretchy and — it was all very sad.) But wait. Isn't that a woman I see about to leap over the edge? I ask my Indonesian informant about it. Bungee, in Indonesian comes out as a sort of transvestite leap. The origins of bungee, in *High Life*.

Spell it out

FROM the transcript of a commercial radio broadcast last November on local television and radio stations in Washington, DC, by the Free Congress Foundation and the National Center for Public Policy Research. (The foundation maintains a Web site that provided updates on Paula Jones's sexual misconduct suit against Bill Clinton. In its first month, the number below received more than 4,000 calls.)

NOEL Coward would not have been 100 this year as was stated in an article, *A Talent to Amuse* (G2, Page 17, April 10). He was born on 16 December, 1899.

THE newly-appointed chief inspector of social services, Denise Platt, is not the first woman to hold that position as we said in a news in brief item (Page 9, April 10). The same post, under a different title — director of the social work service in the DRSS — was filled by Joan Cooper from 1971-6.

LAURENCE Olivier's first name was misspelled on the letters page in Saturday's paper.

It is the policy of the *Guardian* to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Myles, by telephoning 0171 230 9339 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 230 9637. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

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Hannah Pool

Yum yum ... Zest finds God

GET HAPPY

Anniversaries

HEMP, Williams, on 14th April 1970 in Oxford, John Hume and Mary Williams, in this a second New Year at Woodstock, Scotland.

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The Guardian Tuesday April 14 1998

Racing

Exclusive looks different class

Tony Paley expects Michael Stoute's filly to boost her claims for the 1,000 Guineas

CAPE VERDI hardened as favourite for the 1,000 Guineas after "winning" the Godolphin yard's trial gallop in Dubai at the weekend and it could be exclusive whose odds will be cut for the fillies' Classic after the Nell Gwyn Stakes at Newmarket today. There is little to choose between Jibe and the selection on their Fillies' Mile running at Ascot in September when Henry Cecil's runner finished second in front of Exclusive as the pair were second and third to Gloria. However, that was an unsatisfactory race and both had problems in running so it would be unwise to read too much into the bare form. Jibe, who had a muscle problem, has not had as smooth a preparation as Exclusive (3.10) and Michael Stoute's filly is given the nod over Ashkanah, who probably failed to stay in the Prix Marcel Bressan on Arc day but who is fit for her reappearance and hails from a stable in fine form. The recent rain has been good news for Danetime (2.35). He never stopped improving last term and had Tomba back in third before being demoted a place for interference after finishing second to Royal Applause in the Group One Haydock Park Sprint in October. Proud Native is highly regarded by his very capable trainer and should go well while Monassib must be feared if the ground has dried up sufficiently. Moon Gorge (3.45) makes some appeal in a typically

trappy three-year-old hand-off. She is race-fit and clearly on the upgrade after two wins already this year, including when running before her holding of Shaanah Romance at Warwick last month. On her breeding and the way she runs, she seems sure to improve further. There is a good word for Jila, who is one of a number who could figure if showing improvement from two to three.

Away from a fascinating if tricky opening Craven meeting card, the best bet of the day could be George Dillingham (4.50) at Wetherby. He looked a horse to follow when winning in convincing style at Doncaster last month. This is the first entry since that win for Denys Smith's runner who was had some staying form on the flat. He has been back-trick seeking Nassun Doru to beat in a race which is not as competitive as the number of runners might suggest.

There are three confirmed front runners lined up for the Crossley Handicap Chase which will ensure a strong pace that suits Prince Of Saints (2.40). Jockey bookings suggest this is the stable's preferred runner over Ham N' Eggs who has been a bit disappointing of late and is visored for the first time. For those who don't mind backing at short odds, the useful hunter Lord Relic (2.45) and Bright November (4.25), who won in good style last time, should double up at Uttoxeter.



National hero... Paul Carberry and Bobbyjo (nearest) start to get the upperhand over Papillon

Carberry follows in his father's footsteps

Ken Oliver

THERE was an emotional finish to yesterday's Jameson Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse where Paul Carberry rode a perfect race on Bobbyjo, who is trained by his father, Tommy. The father-and-son partnership was a popular victory with Bobbyjo being backed to 8-1 from twice those odds. Carberry senior had won back-to-back Irish Grand Nationals for trainer Jim Dreaper on Brown Lad in 1975 and 1976, while his

son had never before won a National. This race has produced some tremendous finishes and yesterday's was no exception with the top-weight Papillon, ridden by Ruby Walsh, and Bobbyjo both responding to their riders' calls. Papillon, giving the winner 11lb, looked for a moment as if he would hold on, but the weight concession proved just too much and he was beaten half a length. The English-trained runner, Call It A Day and Full Of Oats, ran on gamely to take third and fourth places.

"Call It A Day loves this ground but he has had a hard race, so we will see how he is and whether he can go in the Whitbread Gold Cup next," said trainer David Nicholson. Richard Hannon's two-year-olds may not be in the early form expected of them but the rest of his team are on song as Andrew Whyte demonstrated in the Great Conditions Stakes at Kempton. "This is a very good horse, I nearly went to Newmarket with him for the Abernethy but decided he could carry his penalty here. He would have to go

for the big sprints now," said Hannon. Cut in the ground is also vital for Garuda, who ran away with the Listed Magnolia Stakes despite an absence that stretched back to the Ebor meeting at York. Tailed off after pulling too hard in the Great Voltigeur Stakes, he put his best foot forward to force nine lengths clear of Tirkine Venture under Paul Eddery. "He was a nice horse last year but he got jarred up and spent the whole of the winter in Ireland," said trainer John Dunlop. Garuda may next race in France where he is more

likely to encounter the soft conditions he needs again. John Akehurst could aim Marsad at Royal Ascot's Wokingham Handicap after the 12-1 chance gained his first victory in the Teal Handicap at Johnny Staccato. "This is the first one I inherited from Dad that's won. He said he was a nice horse and I did fancy him," said Akehurst. Dante Stakes entry Rafaello completed a double for Mick Channon, trainer of Queen of Scotland, and Richard Hughes with a comfortable win in the Fild Maiden Stakes.

King heads Scottish National

BELMONT KING, with weights for Saturday's St. Leger, heads the Scottish Grand National at Ayr. The 10-year-old was among the 26 at yesterday's acceptance stage but if he is pulled out at Friday's overnight stage the weights will rise. "Belmont King sustained an overreach in the Grand National but that has

healed up well," said Paul Nicholls, his trainer. "He cantered all last week and if I can get all his work into him this week he will run. "If the ground is on the easy side Ottawa will also run with Timmy Murphy in the saddle." Hill's go 8-1 Brave Highlander, Dom Samourai, Kankara, 8-1 Ottawa, Samlo, 10-1 Belmont King, Cariboo Gold and Endipe.

Newmarket Jackpot card with guide to the form

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05	Capit
2.30	Monsoon
3.10	Exclusivo
3.45	Moore Gorge (nb)
4.15	Cheliffah
4.45	Daring Derek
4.50	Way Out (wmp)

Colquhoun back of 26m with right-hand bend at halfway. Straight course of 13m. Going: Good to soft. S. Denotes blinkers. Draw: No advantage. Long distance travellers: Jemmer (3.45) Miss J. Parnell, Ay, 360 miles. Several days' rest: Jemmer (3.45) Miss J. Parnell, Ay, 360 miles. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last racing.

2.05 APRIL MAIDEN STAKES 3YO	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

2.35 ABERMANT STAKES (SHOWCASE RACE)	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

2.55 GREYS MIDDLETON NOVICE HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

3.05 GREYS MIDDLETON NOVICE HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

3.30 DIAMOND EDGE HANDICAP CHASE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

3.10 SHADLOW STUD NELL GWYN STAKES 3YO	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

3.45 CHAMFORD HANDICAP 3YO	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

4.15 STEWARTON MAIDEN STAKES 3YO	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

4.35 GREYS MIDDLETON NOVICE HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

5.05 RACING CHANNEL NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

5.30 PETER J DOUGLAS ENGINEERING LTD SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

David Loder, the Newmarket trainer, landed a touch in the St. Morwen Maiden at Newcastle yesterday when Ethereal, backed down to 5-2 from 5-1, defeated Pursuit Venture by three lengths. "This horse has improved a lot from his only run last year. He is still a baby but he's been showing some decent form at home."

4.45 BOADICEA CONDITIONS STAKES 3YO	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

5.20 MUSEUM MAIDEN STAKES 3YO	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

5.50 MOUNT ARBUS HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

6.20 MOUNT ARBUS HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

6.50 MOUNT ARBUS HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

7.20 MOUNT ARBUS HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

7.50 MOUNT ARBUS HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

Wetherby (N.H.)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.10	Supreme Genetrix
2.40	Princess Of Saints
3.15	Princess Of Saints
3.50	Shore Optima
4.20	Last Ditch
4.50	George Dillingham (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11km with 2000m run-in which is slightly uphill. A fair course which suits the long-striding gallopers. Going: Good to soft. S. In places. S. Denotes blinkers. Long distance travellers: Topsy (4.50) J. Gable, Skelthorpe, 211 miles. Several days' rest: Topsy (4.50) J. Gable, Skelthorpe, 211 miles. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last racing. F. Flat.

2.10 MOORSIDE LAND ROVER CENTRE NOVICE HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

2.40 CROSSLEY HANDICAP CHASE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

3.15 MONTAGU HANDICAP HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

3.50 WETHERBY LONG DISTANCE NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

4.20 HOWARD BROWN MEMORIAL NOVICE HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

4.50 SANDHECK MOTORS HANDICAP HURDLE	CH4
101 (2)	Capit
102 (2)	Monsoon
103 (2)	Exclusivo
104 (2)	Moore Gorge (nb)
105 (2)	Cheliffah
106 (2)	Daring Derek
107 (2)	Way Out (wmp)

Trainer watch
Horses having their first race for a new trainer today - 2.25 Enchanted Cottage, J. Jefferson to K. Bridgwater; 2.55 Red Phantom, S. Moller to P. Redford; 4.35 Countymaster, C. Epton to M. Williams; 5.05 Mewerby, P. Nicholls to M. Pipe and Remember Star, A. Smith to M. K. Whitehouse.
Newmarket: 3.45 Incessant, J. Dunlop to D. Chappell; 4.15 Thayer, S. Bred to M. Tregear; 5.20 Haverhill, J. Dunlop to M. Tregear.
Uttoxeter: 2.45 Ruelin, T. Tate to T. Wiggall; 3.20 Ruelin, C. Hemsley to T. Needham and T. Needham, M. Pipe to B. Llewellyn; 5.30 Tarnish, C. Munn to J. Birt and Time for Action, M. Tompkins to C. Munn.
Wetherby: 2.10 Part's Splendour, H. Collingridge to M. Heath; 4.20 Scotch Irish, M. S. Smith to M. P. Fildes.

KEEPING TRACK	COMMENTARY RESULTS
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UTTOXETER	773 783
EXETER	774 784

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Sports Guardian

Blackburn swept aside before Ewood Park blizzard



Parlour game... the irresistible Arsenal midfielder fires his second goal past Alan Fittis with the Blackburn defence nowhere to be seen

Premiership: Blackburn Rovers 1 Arsenal 4

Arsenal on the rampage

David Lacey

OLD TRAFFORD retired last night to the sound of approaching guns. The cannonade apart at Ewood Park has left Manchester United staring down a barrel, or in Arsenal's case a double-barrel.

A 4-1 win, Arsenal's 11th victory in 14 Premiership matches, has taken Arsène Wenger's brilliant team to within a point of the champions at the top of the table. Arsenal have two games in hand, United have only four to play. As United's manager Alex Ferguson observed after Liverpool's 10 men had forced a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford on Good Friday, Highbury now holds the balance of power.

Having worn down Newcastle

the United's massed defence on Saturday Arsenal swept through Blackburn's thin cover last night much as the snow blew across Ewood for most of the second half.

Three goals for Arsenal in the first 33 minutes ended the match as a contest and by half-time they were four ahead. Blackburn managed a goal themselves in the second half but their defence lay in ruins and Marc Overmars might have had a hat-trick with better finishing.

A week earlier Blackburn had lost 3-1 at home to United after overrunning their opponents in the first half with football which even Ferguson was moved to describe as "quite brilliant". Last night, however, Roy Hodgson's attack was without two essential components, Chris Sutton and Damien Duff, both kept out by weekend injuries.

In Duff's absence Jason Wilcox resumed his normal left-wing role with Callum Davidson, signed for £1.75 million in February, making his first appearance at left-back. From the start Blackburn's defence was ill at ease with itself and elementary errors were ruthlessly punished by Dennis Bergkamp, returning from a three-match suspension, and Ray Parlour, whose pace destroyed the opposition. Patrick Vieira, needless to say, ruled the midfield.

Basically Blackburn's defence turned up for the game 70 seconds late and were chasing a lost cause there. As Remi Garde took a... in on the right Bergkamp... away from Davidson and found himself with a clear run to goal after the ball had flicked off the head of Stéphane Henchoz. Bergkamp

then beat Alan Fittis with a low shot into the far corner. After six minutes the speed of Parlour's sprint on to a return pass from Bergkamp again exposed Blackburn on the right. The cover was nonexistent as Parlour broke clear to drive past Fittis.

Arsenal's third goal was even more preventable. Emmanuel Petit sent a corner on the right short and low to Bergkamp, whose 25-yard shot pierced a crowded penalty area but was blocked by Fittis. It should have been cleared but Parlour headed the queue of Arsenal players waiting for the rebound and again his shot was true.

Understandably Arsenal relaxed a little, concentrating more on possession than aggression. On the half-hour David Seaman's first serious save, dropping on Kevin Gallacher's sharp downward

header, offered a reminder of the potency that still lay in even this depleted Blackburn attack.

But four minutes before the interval a long clearance from Nigel Winterburn found Nicolas Anelka outpacing the battered remnants and impudently showing Henchoz the ball before whipping it away, drawing Fittis off his line and scoring Arsenal's fourth.

The home supporters booed their players off at half-time but within five minutes of the second half Gallacher, oddly unmarked as Jeff Kenna's cross dropped to his feet, restored Blackburn spirits as the blizzard took over where Arsenal had left off.

On Boxing Day, Arsenal were 13 points adrift of Manchester United. Now, like yesterday's snow, they are making a nonsense of seasonal assumptions.

Premiership

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	34	22	7	5	84	25	57
Arsenal	32	18	9	5	58	28	56
Liverpool	32	18	10	4	57	35	56
Chelsea	32	17	3	12	63	38	54
Leeds	34	18	8	8	52	37	54
Sheff Wed	32	14	9	9	54	46	51
Derby	32	14	9	9	54	46	51
Wolves	32	14	7	11	48	41	49
Nottingham	32	14	7	11	48	41	49
Blackburn	32	14	6	12	43	48	48
Coventry	32	11	12	9	38	39	46
Leicester	32	11	11	10	29	33	44
Southampton	32	12	4	16	41	45	40
Wimbledon	32	10	11	11	31	34	41
Sheff Utd	34	11	9	14	48	61	41
Reading	32	10	9	13	39	39	39
Sheff Utd	34	8	11	14	36	47	38
Queens Park Rangers	34	8	9	16	24	41	34
Millwall	34	7	13	14	31	37	33
Barnsley	34	7	10	17	28	54	31
Crystal Palace	32	8	8	16	28	50	28

THE RUN-INS
Arsenal 15 Wimbledon (H); 29 Barnsley (A); 20 Derby (H).
Man Utd 15 Everton (H); 8 Liverpool (A); 10 Aston Villa (A).
Sheff Wed 15 Newcastle (H); 27 Crystal Palace (A).
Sheff Utd 4 Leeds (H); 10 Barnsley (A).

Fergie's war of words all in the mind



Jim White

WITH a month to go we now enter the last lap of the Premiership season, that part known as the mind-game mile. It is around now that Alex Ferguson cheers up the nation with some of his publicly aired mental barbs.

As the football becomes tense and scrappy, Fergie distracts attention from the lack of entertainment out on the pitch and decides to keep us enthralled himself by firing off psychological stinger missiles even more potent than Ronaldo with a ball at his feet in an airport during Easter holiday delays. Or at least, that is what the developing myth workshoped up by pundits and commentators would have us believe.

It all started two seasons ago when, according to legend, Kevin Keegan was so wound up by Fergie's mental incendiaries that his head blew up, a sight which totally undermined the Newcastle dressing room, ensured the lads stopped playing and thus surrendered the league to their closest challengers.

The last year it was Arsenal Wenger who was supposed to have capitulated to the master of the mind game, as the tabloids now routinely refer to Ferguson. Unused to the wiles of the Premiership, the Arsenal manager, if we are to believe the script, showed an inexperience in his public verbal jousting with the master which communicated itself to his dressing room and put the Gunners off their final stride.

And, as this season approaches its climax, such is the growing mystique surrounding the man that every Fergie remark is porched over for evidence of another mental master-stroke. Shakespeare has seldom experienced such textual analysis.

On Sky Andy Gray chuckles knowingly as he deconstructs the United manager's latest. Obligated to fill hours of speculation time, Gray interprets what may, in some quarters, be reckoned statements of the blindingly obvious ("Arsenal are now in the driving seat" or "Blackburn are the best team we have played this season") as utterances of such psychological complexity they could form the basis of the script for the next series of

Cracker: move over Eitz, here's Fergie.

How things have changed. In 1992, when his team fulfilled the Devon Loch role and went wobbly-kneed with the winning post in sight, it was largely reckoned to be Ferguson's fault. He wanted it too much, he was tetchy and nervous, his players became terrified at the thought of his response to failure and subsequently, unable to focus on anything else, failed.

The fact is that both extremes of the Fergie cult are equally exaggerated. In 1992 it was not the manager but future congestion that did for his team and in 1996 Ferguson, renowned throughout football as the luckiest of managers, got lucky again. The comments which have been post-rationalised as poisoned darts fatally wounding Keegan's resolve were actually directed at Leeds United players.

Leeds had sweated blood against Ferguson's side and were due to take on Newcastle later that month. In an effort to chivy them up Ferguson made disparaging remarks about the way they appeared to reserve their best effort for their cross-Pennine rivals. He cannot have expected Keegan to react as he did. It was like baiting for a trout or two and landing a great white shark.

IN TRUTH, managers — Ferguson included — are at their most powerful at this time of the year. Moreover, thanks to Sky's generous provision of cameras at matches, their powerlessness has become part of the theatre. Every match in the run-in is punctuated with shots of the body language of emasculation: heads thrown back in despair, fingers jabbing unheard directions, all articulation lost in a torrent of swearing.

All the planning, chivvying and mind games in the world cannot compensate for a weary back-pass or scuffed chance. Back in December Ferguson was being portrayed as a manager in total control of his game; everything he asked out, in place to the last detail, the Boris Spassky of football. The Champions League was the priority and the Premiership would be woe as insurance by the subtle bundling of the most potent squad in the game.

Four months later his formidable luck deserted him. His players have been injured or off form at precisely the wrong time, his enterprise losing several of its wheels. At this point no amount of cunning in press conferences will make any difference if the team cannot produce the goods. That is the one trouble with football: the manager knows: the players.

Newcastle United 2 Barnsley 1

Shearer nod pierces the gloom

Michael Walker

IN certain northern counties the end of last week was said to be all about the hand of history. The beginning of this week, then, in different northern counties, was all about the hand of relegation.

Since winter began, relegation's icy grip has tightened alarmingly around Newcastle United, pulling Kenny Dalglish's stumbling men backwards and downwards. It seemed shock alone might be enough to drag them down to floorboard level, whereas Barnsley, forced to live within the shadow of the fall all season long, have appeared injured to slipping into something less comfortable.

And yesterday, in the psychiatric ward that is now St James' Park, Barnsley's familiarity with their circumstances kept their mood upbeat, even when behind, and

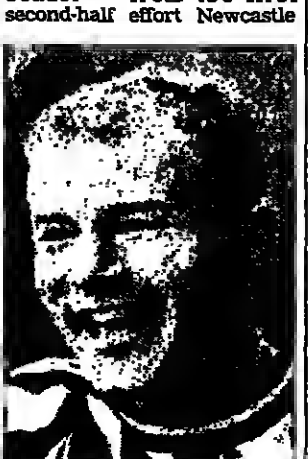
only the dramatic but typical intervention of Alan Shearer's growing forehead five minutes from the end denied Barnsley a valid and valuable point.

Until then Dalglish's increasingly neurotic team had wandered about like drugged patients. They had managed a scrappy goal, Andreas Andersson at last breaking his Tyneside duck, but overall Newcastle's performance was as bad as it gets. No zest, no coherence, no confidence, and Faustino Asprilla, watching from the directors' box, must have been suffering from disorientation as well as frostbite.

Then again Newcastle have been like this for some time, even when Asprilla was here. Dalglish, looking thinner than usual, acknowledged as much. "It's not the kind of football I was brought up on but the players are sacrificing their beliefs to win games. It's not good for the purists but, if

it keeps us in the Premiership, then that's fine."

It has come to this: relief and gratitude for a late winner over Barnsley. Shearer's header — from the first second-half effort Newcastle



Shearer... late winner

had on target — came via Robert Lee, popping up on the right where Keith Gillespie had been so disappointing.

Lee's cross was deep enough for Shearer to peel away from Arjan De Zeeuw, who claimed that he had been fouled, and Shearer's forceful butt gave David Watson no chance. "It was just a run-of-the-mill cross," said a dejected Danny Wilson, "but that man was on the end of it. De Zeeuw reckons he was pushed but I think he was just in the wrong position."

Refusing to let his disappointment overwhelm his appreciation for the stubbornness of Barnsley's display, Wilson added: "We still have a lot to play for, no one has really pulled away from us today. The Tottenham game is a massive one."

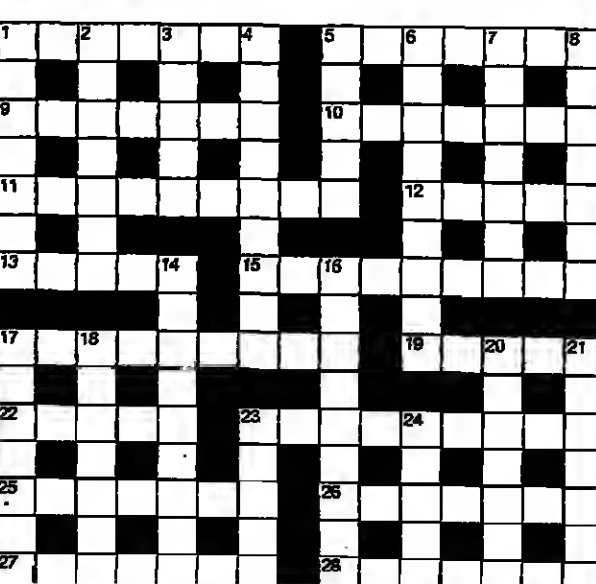
Indeed it is — on Saturday at Oakwell, Barnsley remain two points behind Spurs but Wilson's team are blossoming in the grit at the bottom.

All the football played yesterday, and there was not much of it, came from the visitors, Neil Redfearn impeccable as usual and Ashley Ward always available. It was not often penetrating — Shay Given's first serious involvement came with the 50th-minute equaliser — but it was solid. Redfearn and Ward combined for the goal, Ward collecting his captain's centre and driving low at Given. It was a far from fierce shot but Given spilled it and Jan Åge Fjørtoft collided with the post as he poked the ball home.

The brief spirit of optimism that had accompanied Anderson's opener just before half-time — a header after Shearer's shot had rebounded off the crossbar — evaporated. It returned with the winner but Newcastle are still not safe; four of their remaining five games are away from home, beginning at Old Trafford on Saturday. No points there then.

Guardian Crossword No 21,248

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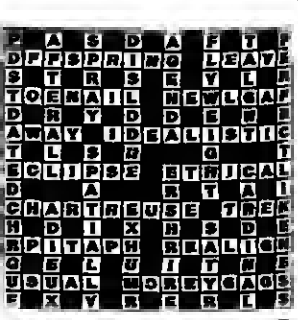


Across

- 1 Wine served in company susceptible to influence (7)
- 2 Tommy's secret (7)
- 3 Nigel, though uncertain, grasped the way to shine (7)
- 4 Fix a handle to (7)
- 5 Everyone is gathering round the lady for a gardening class (9)
- 6 French novelist not the first to cause a stir? (5)
- 7 Temporary housing around the river. This one? (7)
- 8 Man, say, to boss: "It depends on suitable post" (4,5)
- 9 A duke put on and gave a lecture (9)
- 10 Some ramblers redoubled tracks, having gone astray (5)
- 11 Gaffer prepared to start round the West. Perhaps it suited him (5)

Down

- 1 Part of book on a part of Bible showing series of tableaux (7)
- 2 It's blocking an entrance. Keep moving (7)
- 3 Vegetable in Edinburgh, we hear, is cheap (5)
- 4 Initially dieted with mostly snack meal in preparation for feast (9)
- 5 Iron hit too forcibly? (5)
- 6 Priest one ordered to act as mediator (9)

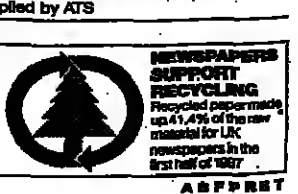


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,247

- 7 Startle with a noise around end of night (7)
- 8 One puts down a mark to get one in? (7)
- 14 Exercise's monotonous routine (9)
- 15 Ready to overlook faults in costly boring refined man (8)
- 17 The case of one serving abroad? (7)
- 18 A bit of drill (instrument) one can imagine (7)
- 20 Flashy flier's angle (7)
- 21 Upset can make one angered (7)
- 22 The odds taken about a little gamble (5)
- 24 One associated with poetry books a religious education brought up (9)

Solution tomorrow

12. Suck? Then call our solutions line on 0904 555 555. Call cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ADS



Where will the people of Northern Ireland be when their heroes are gone? Now they return to normal life, to the mundane, the humdrum, the worries about the mortgage or the rent. It is the piquant, ironic tragedy of all warriors that what they are supposed to be fighting for is peace and when they get it, by and large they don't know what to do with it.

Linda Grant, G2 page 7

سكان من الامل

Gorgeous G...
Labour's rebel...
with a heart...
with European...

Teach demand hours

B

Space invaders: crowded Columbia's shuttle launch a tale of misadventure and men

inside

British

5